

Fate Falls Hard on Our Shoulders by magicalartist

Series: [Brave Enough Series \[2\]](#)

Category: Avatar: Legend of Korra, Elder Scrolls V: Skyrim, Once Upon a Time (TV), Stranger Things (TV 2016), Supergirl (TV 2015), The 100 (TV), The X-Files

Genre: Angst with a Happy Ending, Clexa Week, Dark One Curse, F/F, F/M, Flame of Prometheus, Multi, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - PTSD, Purity, SuperCorp, Swan-Mills Family, Swan-Mills-Charming Family, Swen - Freeform, The Flame - Freeform, True Love, swanqueen - Freeform

Language: English

Characters: Abby Griffin, Aden (The 100), Alex Danvers, Asami Sato, Bellamy Blake, Cat Grant, Cigarette Smoking Man, Clarke Griffin, Dana Scully, Eleven (Stranger Things), Emma Swan, Evil Queen | Regina Mills, Female Dovahkiin | Dragonborn, Fox Mulder, Hank Henshaw | J'onnn J'onzz, Henry Mills (Once Upon a Time), Jim "Chief" Hopper, Kara Danvers, Korra (Avatar), Lena Luthor, Lexa (The 100), Lillian Luthor, Lincoln (The 100), Maggie Sawyer, Marcus Kane, Mon-El (Supergirl TV 2015), Monica Reyes, Octavia Blake, Prince Charming | David Nolan, Raven Reyes, River Song, Rumplestiltskin | Mr. Gold, Serana (Elder Scrolls), Snow White | Mary Margaret Blanchard, Wicked Witch of the West | Zelena, William Scully, minor character deaths - Character, no major characters die.

Relationships: Clarke Griffin/Lexa, Evil Queen | Regina Mills/Emma Swan, Kara Danvers/Lena Luthor, Korra/Asami Sato, Monica Reyes/Dana Scully, Prince Charming | David Nolan & Snow White | Mary Margaret Blanchard

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-05-11

Updated: 2017-12-28

Packaged: 2022-04-03 15:06:44

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: Graphic Depictions Of Violence

Chapters: 33

Words: 157,485

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

It's been a week since the Daxomite invasion failed and things are just starting to calm down in National City. but when Lena Luthor is kidnapped by a top secret organization after an argument with Kara, Lena's birth mother reappears and goes to the only person she knows is willing to help, Emma Swan. Can the Swan-Mills help save Lena and reunite her with her long lost birth mom? and what other secrets from Emma's past are waiting to be discovered?

"two women bound by fate, both pure light, and pure dark, from them a new line will rise. from two saviors bound by the most powerful magic of all, a savior will rise for every realm"

Author's Note: Please don't misinterpret my openness to constructive criticism as permission to be a dick. If you do not like my story don't read it. No one is holding a gun to your head and forcing you to. If you decide to be an asshole, your comments will be promptly removed.

1. Untold Stories

Author's Note:

And here is the first chapter of the Sequel folks. if you are reading this story and you have NOT read Brave Enough, while you don't have to to enjoy this story, I strongly recommend reading that first. While the first few chapters of Brave Enough follows the canon of both the original shows pretty closely, it takes several sharp turns away from canon fairly early on, and a lot of lore is explored. If you want to get the most out of this story, you definitely want to read the original as you will otherwise be extremely confused as to what is going on.

I will take the same approach to the lore of the shows I am introducing. Everything from the shows will be canon up to a clearly defined point, where we then diverge from the familiar stories.

okay, now that the logistics are out of the way, happy reading and remember, commenting on my story is the surefire way to ensure this story keeps going ;-)

Emma gave the woman across the table from her a sad smile, “ it is good to see you again. I’ve missed you”

The brunette nodded, “ I’ve missed you too Em. More than I thought was possible”

Emma took the woman’s hand in her own. “I’m sorry, I know this is hard for you”

“She has to be safe, that’s all I care about. I can handle...” she wipes a stray tear from her eye, “I can handle staying away, If I know she’s safe”

“ you have my word, I will look out for her. This is her best chance, you know that”

“ it doesn’t make it any easier”

Emma sighed heavily, “ don’t I know it”

“The brunette squeezes her hand gently, “ how long has it been Emma, since you saw them?”

Emma ran a hand through her blonde locks, “ about three years”

The brunette shook her head, “ are you sure, absolutely sure that this is the best option? I’m sure they miss you”

Emma shook her head sadly, “ they don’t remember me. I don’t exist until I bring my daughters home safely”

“Em....” there was tangible grief in the brunettes voice, “ let me assure you, they feel the hole you’ve left behind. You should go home”

“ not until I save my girls. I have to save them Mon, I have to make my family whole, and while Regina doesn't remember me right now, if she did, she would want me to do this, to put my family back together”

“ from what you've told me about her, she would likely leave you behind and go after them herself”

Emma nodded, “ but she's not... ” she motions to herself in her dark clothes, severe makeup and tightly pinned hair, “ this... anymore, I am. I have to protect her from the darkness. she's worked too hard for her happy ending to lose it all again”

“ what of your happy ending Emma?”

“ i'll worry about that when my family is reunited. until that happens, I'll never be happy”

The brunette nodded, understanding exactly the pain Emma's words came from, “ well I wish you the best of luck”

Emma nods, pushing her chair back to stand. She slides a white piece of paper across the table, “ If you need me Mon, go to this address. Don’t plug it into a GPS, it doesn’t exist. Follow the instructions on the back. If I am not there, Regina will help you.”

“ how, if she doesn’t know me or you?”

Emma smiles wistfully, “ it’s who she is. She can’t stand the idea of a child being separated from a loving mother. If she is ever in danger, and I haven’t returned, Regina will help.”

The brunette stands and draws Emma into a hug, “ don’t forget who you are, Emma Swan, Dark One or not, you have a family who loves you, friends who adore you, and....”

“ I know Mon, I love you too”

the brunettes eyes were red rimmed, “ I do love you, even though my heart...”

Emma pressed a chaste kiss to her forehead, “ belongs to another, as does mine. We never would have worked, Mon.”

Mon gives her a sad smile, “ no... we wouldn’t have. It just... wasn’t meant to be. But that doesn’t mean you don’t still hold a dear place in my heart”

Emma takes a deep breath, “ do me a favor and stay safe, Agent Reyes”

“ I will, I promise, and you be careful, Emma Swan, don’t forget who you are”

Emma released the woman in her arms, her heart aching over how much she reminded her of Regina. " no promises"

She walked away from the gorgeous brunette once more, her demons had quieted in the presence of the woman who reminded her so much of her true love, but the moment she turned away and left the little diner they had retreated to after their mission, her demons rose sharply to the surface once more. She went around the cafe to the dark alley behind, called up her magic and searched once more for her daughters, and in a grey plume of smoke vanished once more.

2. But Legends Never Die

“ You betrayed my trust. You went behind my back, broke our deal and exposed us.” the man said through the line.

She shuddered at the sound of his raspy voice. “ I’m sorry, I...”

“ no more excuses, you’ve exposed us. Now we will make you pay”

Her heart clenched with fear. She hoped, that *she* was safe. She might lose her own life, but so long as her daughter was safe, hidden away, she could deal with whatever came. she could warn everyone else, but she couldn't protect her friends if she was worried about her daughter's safety.

gathering a measure of calm, she quietly states, “ do what you must.”

“ Oh, I will, let me assure you of that. And I will certainly pass your invitation along. I will be sure to tell your daughter you betrayed her before we kill her” He paused for effect, “ oh yes, we found her alright. Hiding her in plain sight, definitely one of your more brilliant plans, tell me did you come up with that on your own? Hiding her with one of the most dangerous families in America?”

She froze, ice running through her veins, “ don’t you dare hurt her! I’ll do anything...”

“ you should have thought of that before you went running back to the FBI. now your daughter will pay the price for your weakness”

“Please!”

She heard the click of the phone and her knees gave out from under her. After everything she had done to protect her daughter and hide her away from the dangers of her job, she had failed. Her daughter was now going to pay the price, again

Everything in her wanted to hunt down the man responsible for taking her daughter but her gut urged caution. She couldn’t go after him alone. He was too powerful, with far too many resources. She needed help. She considered calling Scully, but her angry words

replayed in her mind, taunting her, calling her weak.

She watched her approach in the rain, it taking all her strength to remain seated instead of meeting her halfway. Monica hadn't seen Scully in years, and her breath caught in her throat when she saw how beautifully the fiery redhead had aged. Scully approached cautiously, dipped her head in acknowledgement and Monica rose to meet her, grasping Scully's arm as she drew her in for a kiss on her cheek, "Agent Scully" she acknowledged, hating the way her voice softened automatically around Scully.

She released her carefully and Scully seemed surprised by the gesture, "Agent Reyes" before promptly softening, "Monica"

Monica took a deep breath and sighed, "I wish this was under better circumstances and..." She hesitates, "I wish a lot of things were different here today"

She saw Scully's walls slowly climb back up as she evaluated Monica. "You had something to tell me?"

Monica gave her a slight nod, her voice wavering, "Something you need to know"

She hesitated, and Scully filled the silence, "I looked you up, when I went back to the FBI. They said that you had been gone for a decade, that you left in a hurry"

Monica shook her head, knowing Scully would never understand why she chose this path, "I made certain choices. You might not approve, or understand, but they made sense to me at the time"

She takes a deep breath, and tells Scully about the cigarette smoking man, "He'd been near death, so badly burned that they had to reconstruct his entire face"

Scully evaluated Monica carefully and asked, "Why would he summon you?"

She hesitated, knowing her closest friend and confidant would never forgive her, "He had an offer to make"

"What did he want Monica?"

Monica briefly summarized her visit with the smoking man, "He wanted to make a deal with me, one that left me very little choice"

Dana nodded carefully, " It changed your whole life" Monica guessed Dana was referring to her decision to stand by Mulder.

"You have to understand why. He threatened my life. He claimed to be the most powerful man alive"

She shook off the memories that rose at her recollection and shifted course before she revealed more than was safe, "You must have a sense of what's happening." Her voice wavers as she fights for control over her emotions, "...heard the reports"

"How did he threaten you Monica?" Monica sighed, Dana had a way of cutting directly to the point.

Monica carefully evades the question, "The ultimate weapon the ability to depopulate the planet." She carefully erected her own mask, knowing that she was shutting Dana out, knowing it would hurt them both. "To kill everyone but the chosen"

Dana was getting angry, "By tampering with thier DNA"

Monica pushed forward ignoring the pain she was causing them both, "Science acquired in the fifties, given to them by an alien race"

Dana nodded, following her, " Alien DNA, mixed with our DNA"

" It's not quite so simple" she recalls the conversation with the cigarette man, " It's in the vaccines. and has been passed down genetically ever since"

Dana backed away from her, standing swiftly, "Why did you call me monica, to tell me what a coward you are?"

Monica flinched at the betrayal in Dana's tone, "To tell you you're protected"

"What are you talking about?"

"Your abduction, the tests, your DNA Dana. You're safe. You're one of the

chosen elite"

"They tampered with my DNA..."

Monica stood, frustrated that she couldn't divulge the full truth to her closest friend, " We are both protected Dana" her gaze meets Dana's anger head-on, " That's what he was offering me"

"What about everybody else?" Dana sounded grief stricken and Monica swallowed her own grief, shaking her head, "Everyone else is happening. It's been in motion since 2012"

"Then we have to stop it!"

Monica tries to lead Dana to the answer, carefully, knowing she's come too far to go back now, "The science is complicated'

" and Mulder... where is Mulder?"

Monica nearly smiles, impressed that Dana had put that much together

"He loves Mulder, he sent a man to him, to offer Mulder a deal"

"He won't take it, you know that Monica"

" I had to try. I've always protected you, I couldn't stop this Dana, I tried. For years I tried. the best I could do was ensure you and Mulder would live."

" You betrayed everything you stood for, for what?"

"To protect the ones I lo... Care about, Dana. I don't expect you to approve or understand, but I do need you to trust me. If you want to save Mulder, this is what you are going to need to do..."

Monica had revealed what she could, and her closest friend and confidant had turned her back on her. It had hurt far more than she ever expected. She had fought tirelessly for Scully, protected her, protected William, and Mulder, while carefully tucking her love for Scully away, behind a wall of false smiles. In the end, she had run to

Scully, out of her love for her in a last ditch attempt to stop the impossible, and Dana had walked away from her, calling her a liar and much worse, completely unaware of the sacrifices Monica had made to save her. the decision could now likely cost her daughter's life.

no sooner than she had returned home from that meeting than the cigarette man called, and issued his chilling threat against her daughters life. she had tried to save her friends, and would likely lose them all now.

Her mind dismissed Scully as an option and she went to her purse, to the small pocket on the side. She dug around blindly for a moment before pulling out a tattered piece of paper with familiar handwriting. She flipped it over, and while the page was torn in the corners, and horribly wrinkled and faded with time, the words were still legible. She grabbed her coat and her keys and dashed out the door, tattered page in hand.

She followed the instructions to the letter, and despite the mayhem on the higheays due to the Spartan Virus eventually found herself driving on a dark road with nothing but trees. She had been on the road for well over an hour and was beginning to wonder if she had made a wrong turn somewhere, or worse, if the town she was seeking no longer existed. where the highways had descended into absolute chaos, this road was completely barren of any signs of life or civilization.

Emma's words drifted back to her, *“ you can't see the town from the outside, because of the magical barrier protecting it from the outside world. When you see the orange line on the road, keep going, don't slow down. And put this on”*

Monica ran her fingers over the necklace Emma had given her all those years ago. She could still sense Emma's energy, and the spell placed over it. It was a powerful protective charm that would protect her from harm while crossing an otherwise impenetrable barrier.

Up ahead, her headlights fell on the line drawn across the otherwise barren road. Her heart rate picked up as soon as what she was seeing registered. Even if she hadn't been told to look for this exact marker,

it was oddly out of place with the surrounding area. She stared at it as she approached, her apprehension growing. She pulled the car over just before crossing and stepped out. Emma was right, other than the line she had been told to look for, there was absolutely nothing to suggest that there was a town hidden behind the trees. She sighed, gathered her courage and climbed back into the car.

“Please be there, I need you Emma” she briefly wondered if Emma was still the Dark One, but she hadn’t appeared after Monica let her name slip, so she guessed not.

She put the car in reverse, backed up enough to cross the boundary at a decent pace and drove forward, crossing the line. She felt the necklace she wore vibrate and her skin tingled all over as she passed through the invisible barrier but was otherwise unaffected. She breathed a sigh of relief and smiled at the crooked Welcome to Storybrooke sign as she recalled Emma regaling her with the tale of how she first came to Storybrooke. There was still no other signs of human civilization nearby, but as she drove on, her confidence grew. They were here, she could feel it.

For all of her years as an Agent of the FBI and undercover with the far more secretive agency she had been working for more recently, Monica Reyes knew better than to question her instincts. And her instincts were screaming at her that there was powerful energy at work here. As she approached a break in the trees, her long drive was rewarded, with the clock tower coming into view.

Her brow furrowed when she realized that Storybrooke was quite a bit bigger than Emma had described, and while the streets were quiet, there were more of them than she anticipated.

Emma’s directions, while probably correct years ago, were now wrong. Streets were not where they were meant to be. She managed to find the diner Emma had described and got out of the car, desperate to stretch her legs and take a much needed bathroom break.

The bell above the door clanged loudly as she entered and an elderly woman behind the counter looked at her oddly when she walked in, “Hi,” Monica stated calmly, “ restroom?”

The woman pointed to a dimly lit hallway, “ first door on the left”

Monica nodded and went followed the woman's instructions.

After washing her hands and splashing cold water on her face, Monica took a deep breath and headed back out to the diner.

She stepped up to the counter and waited patiently while the older woman whispered furtively to a younger woman who eyed her curiously. She heard the young woman whisper, “ don’t be rude granny, she’s not a threat”

How do you know? Why’s she carrying a gun if she’s not a threat?” Granny retorted and the younger woman smiled, “ I can feel it. She needs our help”

The younger woman turned to her and extended her hand, “ hello, I’m Ruby, this is my Granny. You’re new to town, but you look familiar, did you arrive with the new group?”

Monica’s brow furrowed, “ no... I’m... looking for someone”

“Aren’t we all?” Granny retorted. Ruby shot her grandmother a warning look and evaluated Monica for a long moment, “Who are you looking for?”

Monica paused, “I’m looking for Emma Swan, or...” she consults the tattered page and photograph in her hands, “ Regina Mills?”

Ruby arched a brow, “ you know Emma and Regina”

“ I knew Emma, once upon a time... and she told me if I needed help, that I could find her here, and if she wasn't here, to find Regina”

Ruby nodded thoughtfully, “ well, you are in luck, they both just got home today, Miss...”

“ I’d... rather not disclose my name”

Ruby gave her a calming smile, “ no worries, just promise me you are not here to cause any harm”

“I... need their help. I’m undercover, I can’t reveal my identity to just anyone”

Ruby smiled kindly, “ I believe you. I would know if you were going to hurt them. Don’t make me regret trusting you”

Monica nodded and swallowed when Ruby gave her a hard look, “I would never, I swear”

“Good. now what can I help you with?”

“Could.. You tell me how to get there? Emma gave me these instructions years ago, and it would appear that the town has changed considerably in that time”

Ruby grinned, “Yeah, it sprang up virtually overnight” Granny elbowed Ruby, giving her a sharp reproaching glare, and Ruby chuckled.

She grabbed a map off the counter, “Here, a lot of the locals needed a map to figure out where everything was too, the town really did grow pretty fast.”

Ruby pointed out their location on the map, and highlighted the path to Miflin. “It’s the huge mansion at the end of the road. You can’t miss it.”

She handed Monica the map and wished her luck. Monica nodded and headed back to her car. After another twenty minutes of driving, Monica found herself on Miflin and she soon realized, Ruby was not exaggerating about the size of the home. It was a massive white mansion. At least three times the size Emma had described to her. Honestly, it looked more like a castle than a home, with the various wings that looked like recent additions. She frowned at the number of vehicles parked out front. They were obviously having a social gathering. She hesitated, maybe this was a mistake.

Her thoughts went to her daughter, with her raven black hair, her wounded expression when Monica had explained that mommy had to go away for a while, and she would have to go stay with another family until she could come and get her. Her daughter hadn’t

understood. She had been so hurt, and even more-so when Monica couldn't promise when they would see each other again. Handing her nine year old little girl over to social services had been the hardest thing she had ever done. She had seen the devastation it had brought to Scully, and had longed to share her own grief with Scully over the loss of her daughter several years earlier, but her desire to still protect her daughter won out. she suffered in silence and sought to comfort Dana, ignoring the fresh pain by losing another child, even one that wasn't biologically hers. She had protected and loved William, and had grieved with Scully over giving him away, but when her nine year old daughter was carried away in the arms of a stranger, it had been Emma Swan who comforted her. Scully didn't even know Monica had a daughter.

They had drifted so far apart after she and Mulder went on the run. Monica's heart had never healed from that wound and neither had her relationship with Scully. She had longed to share her struggle with giving up her daughter with Scully, . She had never been able to go visit her daughter. She had only watched her from afar, watched her grow up with a family who ended up being twisted and dangerous. She had wanted to intervene several times but Emma had assured her that while they were a threat to the world, her daughter could not be with a family more powerful or protective. So she had watched her daughter grow into a confident, powerful woman from afar. She saw her on the news occasionally and her heart would clench every time she realized her little girl was now a fully grown woman, strong, capable and yet, still incredibly vulnerable. She hadn't turned out like her adopted brother, who turned out to be her half brother. Monica shuddered at the memory of her daughters father. Being with him had been a mistake, the only good to come of it was her little girl.

She had panicked when her birth father found her and adopted her. She had called Emma away from her own daughters to try and intervene but Emma had kindly told her that no one would protect her more fiercely than the family she was now with.

Now though, even her powerful last name hadn't protected her from her birth mother's mistakes. Her daughter had been taken, and every moment she waited, made it more likely that her daughter would die.

She shook off her anxiety and stepped out of the car. She walked up the sidewalk and approached the massive door and knocked. She could hear the raucous laughter inside, and only her love and fear for her daughter kept her on the porch, knowing that she was about to interrupt an otherwise pleasant evening for the people inside. Her knock went unheard so she rang the doorbell.

A moment later the door opened and Monica stared in awe at the brunette in front of her. Emma had shown her a picture, years ago, of Regina Mills. There was no doubt in her mind that this was indeed the same woman. Exactly the same woman, age and all.

Regina was staring at her expectantly, and Monica managed to stammer, “Hi... I’m not sure if I have the right address. I’m.. um... looking for...”

“ Mon? What are you doing here?” Monica’s heart clenched at the familiar voice, as Emma appeared behind Regina, staring at her with obvious surprise, and a hint of fear. Emma already knew why she was here, she could feel it.

Monica couldn’t help her surprise, “ Em” she breathed, she swallowed and tried to smile but her face wouldn’t cooperate, “ you haven’t aged a day... either of you...” Emma looked exactly the same as she had the first time they met, over twenty six years ago, and while her hair was no longer white like it had been nineteen years ago, she otherwise looked the same. She was wearing her signature skinny jeans tucked into boots, a long sleeved blouse and signature leather jacket. It was familiar, and comforting, if not slightly disturbing, that while Monica had aged with time, Emma remained unchanged. She glanced back at Regina, who was exactly like her photo, except with shorter hair. She looked, softer than her photo, even though her gaze was sharp and intensely scrutinizing her at the moment.

Regina shuffled uncomfortably and glanced at Emma before returning her attention to Monica, her voice taking on an edge of steel, “ I don’t mean to be rude, but who exactly are you?”

Monica could sense Regina’s frustration. She swallowed and nodded, “Right, I’m sorry, let me get to the point” she extends a trembling hand to Regina, “I’m former Special Agent Monica Reyes, and I need

your help”

Notes for the Chapter:

I'm curious.. has anyone figured out show number four and who Monica's daughter is? I am sure wolfie has a theory... lets hear it ;-)

3. There will be blood in the water

Notes for the Chapter:

and here is the new chapter folks. chapter four is well under way, may be a day or two before it's up. This probably sounds lame, but I could use some encouragement if you guys are intrigued by this story the first comment on this story was a bit discouraging and I nearly gave it up.

The last person Emma expected to see on the massive porch was Monica Reyes. The second she realized that was exactly who was on the porch, her heart clenched. The only reason Monica would show up here was if her cover was blown and her daughter was in danger as a result.

Regina was tense, Emma could feel it radiating off of her in waves. Emma gently grasped Regina's free hand as Monica shook her other. Emma looked Regina in the eye, "She wouldn't come here if it wasn't serious 'Gina, we should hear her out.'" She stated softly, her eyes pleading with Regina to trust her.

Regina glanced between the two women, and Emma stood tall under her scrutiny, she had nothing to hide. She hadn't cheated on Regina during the many years they were apart. Her relationship with Monica was complicated, and while they had loved each other for a very long time, they had realized they were better off as friends and Emma had started seeing Walsh shortly after their breakup.

Henry came looking for his two mothers and Henry grinned, "Monica! Hi!"

Regina's head whipped around so fast it was alarming, " Henry, you know her?"

" Yeah, she was mom's girlfriend in New York..." He noticed the murderous look in Regina's expression and backed away, "... And I thought Ma had told you that" He glances at Emma sheepishly, "Oops?" before darting back to the dining room.

Emma sighed heavily, " Monica, come in, please"

Regina glared at Emma, " Who said we were inviting her in, I don't let strangers into my home"

" Regina, come on, she needs our help"

"No, she needs your help apparently, I've never heard of her" the anger in Regina's tone was biting but Emma heard the pain behind it and sighed, " Regina, it's not what you think, give me a chance to explain..."

Monica spoke quietly, sounding defeated, " I can go, Em, call me?" she didn't wait for a response, she turned and walked away, her shoulders shaking.

Regina sighed heavily, shot Emma one last look, muttered, "Why do I think I am going to regret this?" and called after Monica, " Ms. Reyes, wait"

Emma nearly smiled at the familiar apologetic cadence to Regina's voice.

Monica paused and turned around, hope gleaming in her tearful eyes. Regina crumbled, "We are in the middle of a dinner party. You look tired, and hungry. Please join us, and after we have sent everyone home, we can chat"

Monica was back on the stairs, embracing Regina before Regina or Emma knew what was happening, " Thank you" she breathed, " I had nowhere else to turn"

Regina was stiff and patted Monica's back awkwardly, "Yes well. Let's get inside before the whole town shows up wondering why there's a stranger here"

Monica released Regina and Emma gave her a light, quick hug before ushering her inside and taking her coat.

Regina pointed down the hall, " the bathroom is the second door on your right, if you would like to freshen up before joining us. And I have to warn you... our family is... a bit unconventional... and loud... if you would rather wait in the den..."

Emma heard Monica's stomach rumble noisily and Monica flushed, " I don't mind noisy and loud. I am awfully hungry..."

Regina gave her a hostess smile, "Then you are welcome to join us when you are ready"

Monica nodded gratefully and headed to the bathroom. Regina turned to Emma, her expression returning to wounded as soon as Monica was out of sight, "Miss Swan"

Emma glared at her, "Hey, I know you were caught off guard, and you have every right to be upset, but before you blow this out of proportion, let me explain, okay?"

Regina nodded, "Fine, explain"

Emma tugged her down the hall to the den and closed the door, "first of all" she stated calmly as she turned around to face the brunette she loved, "I did not cheat on you, or sleep with anyone during the entirety of the twenty one years we were apart, so you can chill out"

Regina stared at her, "You were celibate that entire time?"

Emma stepped forward and took Regina's hands in hers, " Yes Regina, I was. I am, and always have been, since the moment we met, been yours. I have not been with anyone but you since I returned to storybrooke with Henry and Hook."

Regina's expression morphed from disgust at the pirate's name, to awe over Emma's loyalty to her, to sadness when what she stated

became clear. “ Monica?”

Emma nodded, “We worked several cases together when she was with the FBI. We worked one right before Henry found me the first time, and I didn’t see her again until the second curse.”

Emma paused, “ I couldn’t remember you, but... you were in my dreams. Monica and I... we tried dating, but like with Walsh, it felt like something was missing. We called it off and remained close friends”

“If that’s true, why did you never tell me about her?” Regina’s defenses were slow to come down.

“She’s undercover with a top secret government organization, while working to undermine another top secret organization. She asked us to keep quiet about her, even before this case. I know it hurt you to find out like this, and I am sorry, but I was honoring the request of a dear friend”

“How did she recognize me?” Regina was determined to get the whole truth.

“I was in Storybrooke, about a year after the curse, checking on you and Henry and she called me. Somehow, she figured out I was the Dark One and figured out how to reach out to me. She was going undercover and needed to ensure the safety of her daughter. I am the only person besides herself who knows the identity of her daughter”

Regina processed this in silence, “So if she’s here?”

“Her cover was blown, and her daughter’s life is at stake. And she has no one else to turn to”

Regina sighed, “How did she know to come to an invisible town? How did she know me?”

“ I gave her directions here, I told her if anything ever happened, to come find me, and if I wasn’t around for whatever reason, to find you.”

Reigna accepts this, “So let me get this straight, you dated her, a very long time ago, Henry knows her, you guys are close enough that you are literally the only other person in the world who knows of her daughters existence and you never told me about her?”

Emma sighed, “ Is this how it’s going to be Regina, you getting upset every time you discover something that happened while I was away?”

Regina starts to argue but Emma raises her hand tiredly, “Reigna, hear me please, We dated during the first curse, when you sent Henry and I away. We have not dated since. I know I hurt you with being gone for so long, and I can’t possibly sit here and tell you everything that happened. I can’t take that separation back. I can’t undo it. And you told me yourself you wouldn’t undo it, even if we had a way to. So please, can you forgive me for dating someone while I didn’t remember you, and not telling you about her and move on?”

Regina nodded, tugging Emma into her arms, “ I am sorry for interrogating you, I overreacted”

“Yes you did, and while it’s understandable, and frankly adorable that you are so jealous of her, there’s no reason to be. My heart has been yours for a very long time. That’s why we broke things off with each other in the first place.”

Regina pulls back and arches an eyebrow, “How’s that?”

Emma chuckles, “ Monica is head over heels in love with this short redhead spitfire named Dana Scully” she pauses and smirks at Regina, “ And I have been head over heels in love with you since we met, even when I couldn’t remember you.”

Regina frowned and Emma smirked, “ I know you noticed how much she looks like you”

Regina nods thoughtfully, “So you are saying you dated her because she reminded you of me?”

Emma nods, “Well, that wasn’t the only reason, but it certainly factored in, as soon as I remembered you, my time with Reyes made so much more sense.”

“ Henry...”

“Loved her but agreed that while we were great friends, we were not meant for each other”

Emma nods to the door,” Now, can we go enjoy our dinner and not leave Mon to handle our crazy family alone?”

Regina nodded, “ You are right. We’ve been in here too long.”

Emma kissed Regina soundly, “ I meant what I said Regina Mills, you are my one and only. I love you”

Regina gave her a soft smile, “And I love you, Emma”

Emma breathed a sigh of relief when Regina took her hand as they headed back to the dining room. Monica was already seated, listening attentively to an animated Henry explain who was who at the table. Every once in awhile, her eyes flitted to Emma and Regina and she gave Emma a warm smile and a thumbs up when she saw their joined hands.

The table cleared out rather quickly, everyone sensing that their unexpected guest was there for more than just the food and a complicated lesson in their confusing mess of a family tree.

Emma listened to Henry explain the fairytale family tree, how his younger sisters were older than him, and briefly explain that dinner

was a celebration of successfully rescuing a whole nation and relocating them across realms. Monica listened with rapt attention, every once in a while glancing over to his moms to smile or to gain confirmation of something Henry said.

Regina leaned over and whispered, “Does she actually believe us?”

Emma smirked, “ She used to work on paranormal cases for the FBI.”

Regina’s brow arched, “Really?”

Monica heard her, “Yes, I’ve seen some rather unusual cases over the years, so I generally don’t rule anything out.”

Henry immediately started grilling her on her cases while Regina cleared the table. Finally, Henry excused himself, informing his mothers that Zelena was taking everyone for a magic lesson out on her farm and he wanted to watch. They dismissed him with a warning to be careful and watched him dart out the door.

Regina motioned to the hall, “Shall we take this to the den?”

Monica nodded, her expression all business.

They followed Regina to the den. She offered Monica a glass of her famous cider and Monica declined with a smile, “ Thank you, but I’ve heard your cider packs quite the punch.”

Regina shot a glance at Emma who shrugged her shoulders and smirked, “ Don’t look at me like that, I had two sips of that stuff the first night we met and woke up in a jail cell.”

Regina handed Emma a glass, “ Funny, you’ve never turned it down when I’ve offered since then”

Emma grinned, “ I toss it in the fire when you aren’t looking” Regina looks deeply offended and borderline angry, “Do you know how difficult this is to make?”

“It was a joke Regina...” Emma backs away playfully, her hands up in surrender.

Monica chuckled at their antics, and Emma remembered their guest, turning and grinning at Monica sheepishly, “ Sorry, Mon...”

Monica waves her off, “Don’t be. You’re happy. You two are great together”

Regina hands Emma a tumblr and they sit on the couch across from Monica. Regina leans forward, “Okay, what can we do for you, Ms. Reyes?”

4. No Turning Back

Notes for the Chapter:

You may have noticed I updated the tags earlier than I said I would. Mainly because, you guys are starting to get better at guessing some on my plot twists. Well done! Enjoy the chapter. It took much longer to get this one written. Pesky grammar and a little thing called a job kept delaying this. anyways, enjoy ;-)

Monica watched the couple across from her for a moment before softly replying, "My daughter's life is in danger." She sighs, "Along with everyone else I care about"

Regina exchanged a look with Emma before asking, "You are positive..."

Monica shot her a dirty look, "I am a mother. I can feel it."

Regina raised her hands placatingly, "I am sorry, I don't mean to imply anything else. I understand, believe me"

Monica apologized immediately, "I'm just... terrified for her, and I don't know where else to turn. Emma assured me that if I ever needed help, that you two would do everything you could to get my daughter home safely"

"We will" Emma stated emphatically and Regina nodded her agreement.

"Tell us what happened." Regina stated softly.

"Emma may have told you, but I am... well... was undercover. My cover was blown and now they have taken my daughter..."

"Who took her?"

"A very dangerous group. They are involved in a variety of conspiracies. I was working at the FBI and was approached by a top secret government organization who works to protect us from aliens."

At Regina's skeptical look, Monica sighs, "Look, I know how this sounds, but we've known that they are here for a long while, and recently, in two separate cities, an alien has gone public, vigilante style. I assume you have heard of Superman and Supergirl?"

Emma and Regina shook their heads, "We kinda live in a giant bubble here Mon. We don't interact with the outside world much"

Monica nodded, "Anyway, I was approached by this organization years ago that now works closely with Supergirl. They wanted me to go undercover with the group I had spent years investigating. It was complicated, but essentially, I was to work at the FBI on unusual cases and feed this organization information on alien activity whenever I encountered it. I was to also ensure I was positioned appropriately to take over the X-files whenever the opportunity presented itself. It was dangerous," Monica shudders at the memories of how close she came to losing her little girl. Emma gave her a soft understanding smile and she found the strength to continue, so I made the most difficult decision I have ever had to make and sent my daughter into the foster system so she would be safe. I never anticipated being undercover for this long. It was supposed to take a year or two at the most to destroy this group they were targeting from the inside, and then I could fight for custody of my daughter again. Instead, my daughter grew up without me"

Regina and Emma shared a long glance and Regina leaned across the empty space and took Monica's hand, "You saw our girls tonight, they grew up without us as well. They turned out pretty well...in spite of the circumstances"

Monica smiled through her tears, " My daughter grew up into a stunning young woman. She's one of the most influential people in her city, and she works tirelessly to help people, to protect people. She's everything I hoped she would be."

Monica took a calming breath, "I got a call, this morning, from the man I was investigating. He told me not to bother coming in, he knew I was planted. I exposed myself when I went to Scully this morning with information pertaining to thier most dangerous plot. a plot that's already in motion. He.. told me he found my daughter, and implied that he had her. He means to make her pay for my

disloyalty.”

She saw Regina tense and saw the rage in her expression. A quick glance at Emma and Monica knew these two women would do everything in their power to help her.

“When did they take her?” Emma asked, her voice low and angry.

“I’m guessing sometime last night. I called her secretary today before the meeting...”

" Monica, we discussed this. it's too dangerous to contact her directly"

"I used a secure line, relax. besides, it was already too late. She didn't show up for work this morning, nor did she inform her secretary that she was away"

Emma nodded, “So people know she is missing?”

Monica shook her head, “No. And even if they did... they don’t know my daughter the way I do. They aren’t as motivated to get her back. That’s why I came here. I fear for her safety, not just from those who took her, but the agency I work for. They... hold a lot of distrust for her” she sighs heavily, " to make matters worse, they are... occupied with the health crisis the man I was trying to bring down activated. even if they weren't dealing with it at right now, they would never help"

“Why?” Regina asks, her eyes communicating that she knows the pain of being misunderstood and distrusted.

“Her father... who found her and adopted her from the system, was a very evil man, that whole family is. They assume she is like her family, but I know her. She doesn’t take after them at all. But no matter how hard she tries to prove herself...”

“She can’t escape the shadow of the past” Regina finishes.

“Exactly. So most everyone in my organization fears her. I am afraid that if they knew she was my daughter, it would only make things worse for her.”

Emma nodded, “Well, we don’t judge. Tell us everything you know about her, and about the people who took her, and I promise you, we will not stop until we get her back”

Regina squeezed Monica’s hands and gave her a reassuring smile, “If there’s one thing this family is good at, it’s finding people”

Emma shot a look of surprise at Regina and Regina grimaced, “Oh dear, I just used the charming family line”

Emma smirked, “It never sounded better”

Monica swallowed and they refocused quickly, “ Let’s get down to business” Regina stated

Emma agreed, “We should probably get the fam in here. This sounds like a mission that’s gonna require the whole crew”

Monica frowned, “ Whole crew?”

Regina smiled, “Yes, I’m not sure how much Emma or Henry told you about us, but our family is full of... uniquely gifted individuals”

Monica smirked, “ So I’ve heard”

Emma grinned, “ Oh, there’s more”

Monica shook her head, recalling the little bit Henry had explained at dinner. The rest of Regina and Emma’s family seemed content to let Henry explain the weirdness that was their lives . “Whatever you think is best, I trust your judgment. Although I don’t want you to put your family in unnecessary jeopardy for mine”

“ That’s why we need everyone. The more hands on deck for this mission, the better, especially when facing the unknown” Emma stated calmly.

Regina’s brow furrowed, “ You mentioned a superhero, Supergirl? Is there a chance she would be willing to help?”

Monica considered for a moment, “ I know my daughter... has worked with her in the past, helped her put some pretty bad people

behind bars, including her adopted mother, so... maybe? There's a lot going on right now though, she may be otherwise occupied. your bubble has protected you for everything happening out there..."

Monica shook her head in frustration, " I've had to keep my distance so information that would be useful, I just don't have. honestly, this is risky, for you all as well. I shouldn't have come here, but I have no other choice"

"It's alright Mon, It's not your fault. You did what you had to do to protect her, that's all you can do"

"Yes, but it wasn't enough" Monica covered her face with her hands, overwhelmed with guilt. " they took her because of me, because I tried to protect the people I care about"

"They won't get away with it, let me assure you of that," Regina stated with anger in her eyes, " Emma, call Z. tell her the magic lesson is over, we need everyone back here as soon as possible."

Emma nodded and stepped into the hallway to make the call.

Regina turned to Monica and sighed, " I apologize for my rudeness earlier Ms. Reyes, my treatment of you was completely uncalled for"

Monica managed a shaky smile, " It's fine, believe me, I get it. You literally just put your own family back together and I show up out of the blue and asked you to drag your family headfirst back into danger"

" Yes, but it was more than that... I felt..."

"Threatened?" Monica guessed, arching her brow at Regina and the brunette ducked her head in shame, " a bit, yes"

Monica waited for Regina to meet her gaze and responded softly, " I love Emma, I do. I always will. But I am no threat to you. She's happier with you, it's not difficult to see that. Besides..."

Regina managed a small smile, " You love someone else"

Monica sighed heavily, " Yes, but she will never care for me the way I

care for her”

Regina shook her head, “Don’t be so sure of that. It wasn’t long ago that I thought a future with Emma was impossible”

Monica was about to respond when several plumes of smoke announced the arrival of Emma’s family. Monica jumped back, startled.

The kids chuckled at her reaction and she relaxed marginally and saw Regina glancing at her curiously before turning to Emma, “ You never showed her your magic?”

Emma blushed and Monica watched Regina realize the double meaning of her. Her kids apparently caught it too as they were laughing.

Emma shook her head and Monica turned to the group now assembled in the den.

The taller brunette approached Monica and held out her hand, “ I am Lexa Kom Trikru, I didn’t have a chance to introduce myself at dinner”

Monica shook her hand and Lexa stared at their hands in confusion. Emma stepped forward quickly, “ She’s still learning the customs of our world. She’s used to clasping forearms in greeting.”

Monica nodded and quickly released Lexa’s hand to grasp her forearm instead. The younger brunette smiled bashfully, “ My apologies, I still have quite a bit to learn of this world’s customs”

“ It’s a pleasure to meet you Lexa, I’ve heard a great deal about you” Monica’s eyes fell on the brunette who was clearly the other twin, “You must be *pequeña ave* ”

The brunette flushed furiously, shooting her blonde mother a dirty look before calmly introducing herself, “ Raven, pleasure to meet you, sorry my little brother dominated the dinner conversation.”

Monica smiled, “It’s alright, it’s nice to finally meet the kids I’ve heard so much about. I’ve heard so much, I feel as if I already know

you”

“No offense, but could we please skip the pleasantries, I cut their magic lesson short to get them back here right away. Could someone please tell me what was so urgent?”

Monica nodded to the fiery redhead holding a young baby in her arms, “ My apologies, Zelena. I know your family just arrived home today, and I am truly sorry for interrupting your reunion, but my daughter is in danger, and I need your help”

“ We’ve never seen you in town before” a tall light-haired man with a kind face stepped forward, offering his hand, “Which realm do you hail from?”

The question momentarily caught her off guard and she tried to clear the confusion with a shake of her head when Emma intervened, “This one dad. She’s from this world”

Now Emma’s father looked confused, “But the barrier outside town...”

“ I gave her a spell to get her inside”

The pixie cut brunette in the atrocious flower patterns glanced at Emma in surprise, “You know this woman how?”

Zelena interrupted harshly, “She’s trying to tell us what is going on, if you two blubbering idiots would kindly shut up long enough she might actually answer all your questions”

Zelena turned her gaze back to Monica, “I apologize for their rudeness in interrupting your story, please, kindly continue”

Monica shook off the odd feeling she was getting from this odd family and tried to start again and Regina calmly spoke up, “How about we all sit down, and give her a chance to finish”

One of the blondes in the room huffed in irritation, the older of them eyeing Monica with suspicion. Her gaze was intense and made Monica uneasy. She had worked on the X files long enough to sense she was in the presence of shapeshifters. She sat on the couch, met

the older blonde's stare head on until the gaze narrowed at her relaxed and moved on.

Monica cleared her throat once everyone was comfortably situated, and said, "Let me start at the beginning"

Everyone nodded.

She took a deep breath and dove in, " I worked for the FBI for a number of years in a unit known as the X- files. My colleagues and I worked tirelessly investigating the paranormal and attempting to expose government conspiracies. My work was dangerous, so when I was in relationships, I kept my work separate from my personal life. I dated one such man, and in 1993 ended up pregnant. I kept my daughter secret for years, hoping that keeping my life at home secret would protect her. Even my closest friend still doesn't know I have a daughter."

"When she was four, the group I had been investigating broke into my home. They intended to find out what evidence I had about their activities. I had hidden the files elsewhere, but my daughter, and the babysitter were home when they invaded the house. They killed my babysitter, and they shot my daughter." Her hands were trembling at the memory. Emma gave Regina a meaningful look and moved from her place beside Regina and took Monica's hand, rubbing soothing circles across her knuckles. Everyone gave her an odd look except for Henry and Regina. She ignored them and nodded for Monica to continue, squeezing her hand gently.

"My daughter was hanging on to life by a thread. I was... desperate, so.. I sought out a high priestess, and asked her to summon Emma. I didn't really expect it to work, even with everything Emma had told me about magic and this real, but to my surprise, it worked. Moments later, Emma was standing in front of me, though I didn't recognize her at first"

Regina glanced at Emma, "You were...?"

" Dark Swan, yes. And furious that someone had summoned me, until I realized who and why"

Monica gave Regina a watery smile, “She saved my daughters life, healed her, took her memories of what happened, helped me get her into the foster system, and made sure that she was put with a family who would truly care for her.”

Monica sighed, “ As for me, I was approached by the DEO, a far more secretive government organization that works to protect our planet from hostile aliens. They wanted me to go undercover and destroy the group that targeted me and my family. I took their offer eagerly. They would ensure noone learned the true identity of my daughter, and I would destroy the group responsible for taking her from me. I would smuggle out intel whenever I could, and I was willing to take that risk, because Emma frequently updated me on my daughter's whereabouts and safety. The DEO helped until it was revealed to them that who my daughters father was. After that, they cut her off and told me to do the same. I continued y work at the FBI, and when the oppurtunity arose, I moved to the X- files. the people targeting beleived my daughter to be dead. for a long time, they had nothing to hold over me. I worked for the FBI for a time, and sent the DEO information whenever the FBI limited my ability to investigate or prevent a conspiracy. Then, ten years ago, I was approached by the man I had been fighting to bring down for years. he offered me a deal, a deal that would protect my closest friends, and in exchange... The people I care about would be protected from the crisis that is now occuring out there.”

Monica noticed Regina's hands tighten into fists and she looked at Emma in wonder, shocked at how protective Regina was of a child, and her friends whom she had never met. Emma simply gave her a soft knowing smile and nodded for her to continue.

“Everything was fine, until I contacted Agent Scully this morning. all my attempts to stop this... failed. I decided to take one last risk, and reach out to Scully, hoping that she could figure something out that I missed. I passed along some incredibly sensitive intel, and I guess, they had been doubting my loyalty for awhile. Anyway, they knew I was a spy, and somehow connected me to my daughter. And this morning, when I returned from that meeting with Dana I received a phone call. They told me not to bother returning. That they knew I was a plant, that they had found my daughter and implied that they

had her.”

She took a deep shuddering breath, “They intend to make her pay for lying to them”

The tension on the room was palpable. Everyone was tight lipped expressions grim. Anger and something else, something dangerous swirled in the eyes of over half of the rooms occupants.

Lexa spoke first, “ We will help you get your daughter back and make them pay for taking her from you”

The blonde beside her placed a hand on Lexa's arm and Monica watched the dark angry cloud in Lexa's eyes calm some. She nodded to Lexa, “Thank you. Emma assured me that f I ever needed help, to come here, I know why now. I can sense it. You all are the only ones who can help me stop them and get my daughter back”

Henry nodded thoughtfully, “You still haven't told us her name Monica”

Monica nodded, “Force of habit, sorry. My daughter’s name is Lena. Lena Luthor”

The pixie cut brunette smiled, “Thank you for trusting us with your story. We will get your daughter back, it’s what this family is best at, finding those who are lost, and bringing them home”

Monica shot a look of sudden understanding at Regina’s earlier comment and for the first time, hope blossomed in her chest. Everyone’s expressions were sharp, determined and fierce.

“We need a plan, this won’t be an easy task. Not everyone can go either.” Emma stated softly and almost immediately everyone started to argue but with a raise of her hand, they all fell silent, “This is dangerous, far more dangerous than anything else we’ve encountered. Trust me. I’ve dealt with this group before, and I barely made it out alive. So if you are asked to remain behind, you do it without question or argument. Understood?”

Several of the younger adults shuffled uncomfortably, their frustration palpable but Regina quickly backed her up, “Magic users

and shifters go. Everyone else.. Stays here to protect our home while we are gone”

Emma’s father starts to argue but Regina levels a steady glare at him, “ Charming, you have an infant son, and absolutely no magic to protect him out there. You and Snow will remain here and protect our children you will not argue, you will trust me on this”

Henry frowns, “ I go though, right?”

Regina gives him a sad smile, “ I’m sorry my young prince, I hate the idea of leaving you here more than you do but you are needed here”

He starts to argue but Monica jumps in to help, “You are the author, correct?”

He nods, his expression hopeful that she will intervene and show his mother's he is needed. She hates to disappoint him, as fond as she is of him, “ Henry, think about it, aside from Rumplestiltskin, you will be the only magic wielder capable of protecting the town. They aren’t trying to protect you because they think you are young and inexperienced, they need you to do the very difficult job of protecting an entire town. That’s a massive responsibility”

His expression morphed into understanding and he looked at his mothers, “You need me to...”

Emma nodded firmly, “Defend the town, use your author's powers to protect and manage the portals. We literally just brought everyone here, we need someone in charge, someone with magic, to make sure order is maintained and the portals are protected, you are the only one who can open and close them at will. The charm... ” Emma corrected herself when her parents shot an identical look of surprise at her and Regina smirked, “ I mean, my parents... will be here to help you.”

She glances at Lexa, “ I’m sorry, we need you on this trip, you, Clarke, Raven, Abby. We will need to get the dragons and Ruby in on this as well”

A brunette with dark braids pushed her way forward, “What about

me?"

Lexa turned to her solemnly, "I need you to work with Bellamy, Indra and Lincoln to maintain order while we are away. Make sure absolutely no one but us crosses that town line, understood? this health crisis..."

Emma turns to Monica, "is it the one you warned me about?"

Monica nods solemnly, "The Spartan virus, intended to wipe out the earth's population with the exception of the chosen elites. From what you told me when I first brought it to you, your shifters and magic users should be immune naturally. But the town's folk, they are absolutely at risk..." Monica turns to Regina, "did you have anyone here vaccinated against common diseases of this world?"

Regina shook her head, "I didn't. I included protection from the diseases, a natural immunity if you will, under the curse."

Monica nods and Emma asks, "what about our newcomers, are they..."

Regina nods sharply, "we made sure to include immunity to this world's diseases as well. Honestly Swan, have you not noticed that people rarely get sick around here?"

"Nevertheless, we need to leave those who might be vulnerable to illness or other injuries here, that includes you Octavia" Emma states softly.

When the brunette frowns deeply, Lexa explains, "Octavia, you are my most trusted captain, aside from Indra. My people respect you. Clarke's people respect you. And you bear the authority of the royal family. We need enough royals here to adequately rule in our stead, to ensure the peaceful transition into this world. They need to be protected from the threats out there. I know it's a great deal of responsibility to demand of you, but I need you to do this"

Octavia nods, "You have my word, I will keep everyone safe"

Emma nodded firmly, "Then it's settled, The Charmings stay, and are *temporarily*, she emphasizes the last word, "In charge of the town,

alongside Henry and Octavia. Magic users and shapeshifters come with us”

She glances at the blonde in the back of the room beside a fidgety redhead, “ Elsa, Anna, you don’t have to stay, This isn’t your fight, your people are dealing with enough right now as it is”

Elsa nods regally, “I will return home to my people, and ensure the safety of the Commander’s refugees until we can find housing for them here. If the royal family has need of me or my sister, we will of course come immediately”

She stood swiftly and embraced the blonde by Lexa, “ It was a pleasure to meet you PrisFisHeda, Clarke of Skiakru. I hope after this situation is dealt with, we can have more time to become acquainted with one another”

Clarke nods, “And I you. May we meet again” she embraces the redhead, “ be careful Anna during your training, Ortan can be... rougher than necessary. Don’t let him push you around”

“Wouldn’t dream of it” the chipper redhead grinned. She turned and bowed to the room, “ it was an honor to meet you all, and I wish you the best on this journey, please be careful”

She looks directly at Monica and smiles, “ You are truly fortunate, you know, to have this family, as your friends. In time, you will realize there are no truer friends than these”

She gave everyone one last wave and they left the room, Henry following them, “ I best make sure nothing unexpected happens with the Arendale portal. They all sit quietly for a moment, and a moment later, everyone heard the door to the basement door click shut softly.

Emma nods to the room, “ Alright everyone, we have a plan, go to wherever home is, get in touch with Mal and Ruby, and we will meet back here first thing in the morning.”

She turns to Monica, “ We have guest rooms, you are more than welcome to spend the night here.”

Regina nods her agreement immediately, “ You’ve been traveling all

day, there's absolutely no reason for you to get back in a car."

"If you are sure it's no imposition"

Regina shakes her head firmly, "It's not, come one, let's get you settled in, and tomorrow... tomorrow we go save your daughter, and the world"

5. Cold To The Core

Lena knew Kara Danver's secret. Honestly, she had suspected it for some time now. But after her last encounter with Supergirl, all doubt had vanished.

"Did you know he was dating Kara?" Supergirl had seemed taken aback and had clearly hesitated to answer her, unwilling to outright lie to Lena. Instead she glanced at Lena's mother and evaded the question altogether, telling them to hurry up on the lead device. When she handed the device to Supergirl, she carefully avoided eye contact with Lena, and for the first time, Lena noticed the small indent just above Supergirl's eyebrow. The identical mark Kara Danvers had above her own brow. How she hadn't seen it before, she didn't know. But now she knew the truth. Kara Danvers was Supergirl.

She sighed heavily as she carried the bag of baking supplies down the hall to Kara's loft. It had been a week since the Daxomites had either perished or fled, including Mon-El, Kara's alien boyfriend. Kara had been unusually quiet, finding excuses to avoid spending time with Lena. Lena had allowed it for a week now, but she was tired of waiting for Kara to confide in her. They were supposed to be best friends. She was wounded Kara didn't feel she could tell Lena the truth. Today she intended to get the truth out of Kara, one way or another.

She knocked on the door and calmed her nerves, trying to contain the nervous tick in her jaw while she waited for the door to swing open. She didn't wait long.

"Lena, what are you doing here?" Kara was obviously caught off guard, and from the looks of it, had been crying.

Lena lifted the bags in her arms, "I came prepared. There's donuts in this one, and stuff to make cookies in these. Where should I set them?"

Kara arched a brow, "Um... what's going on?"

“ I gave you a week. A week to cry and be alone, but now it's time to channel your sadness into something productive”

“Like what?”

“ I seem to recall finding you in here not long ago, grief baking?”

“ Did you not smell the charcoal that day? I’m a horrible cook”

“That’s why I’m here. I can show you”

Kara sighed and stepped aside, “Come on in”

Lena stepped passed Kara carefully, placing the bags on the counter. Kara carefully shut the door and followed her into the kitchen. Lena met her gaze steadily, “How are you Kara?”

Kara shrugged, “You know... the usual... the world goes crazy, your alien boyfriend is forced to leave...”

Lena had been planning to play it cool, try to get Kara to open up to her, but with Kara’s last statement, her fragile patience snaps.

“ So you knew he was an alien?” She didn’t mean for her tone to sound so accusatory and she immediately regrets it when Kara tensed up, “Yes. Why?”

“Oh, I don’t know. I just thought we were close, and then I get kidnapped, find out your boyfriend is an alien, and on the same day am nearly forced into an arranged marriage with him. Seems like something you would want to tell your best friend”

Kara sighed, “Look, I’m sorry. It’s just, revealing his identity is... was dangerous. Not just for him, but for everyone who knew, and it wasn’t mine to tell”

Lena didn’t intend to glare at her best friend, but she knew she had when Kara shied away from her, “Is there anything *else* you are hiding from me, you know, anything that *is* yours to tell?”

Kara evaluated her for a long moment before asking quietly, "What's this really about Lena? You didn't come here to grief bake with me, did you?"

"Were you ever going to tell me?" She asked in a whisper, tears springing up in her eyes. She wiped them away furiously, "I thought we were close, I thought, I could trust you, I have trusted you but you still keep things from me."

"I keep things from you to protect you Lena. I made you a promise, that I would always be there for you, to protect and defend you. I meant that. Everything I do, every choice I make, every secret I protect is done with that in mind"

"Really? It's not because you are afraid of trusting your secret identity to a Luthor, *Supergirl*?" her tone was laced in bitterness.

Kara flinched at the raw anger in Lena's voice, her own eyes welled up with emotion, "Lena, listen to me very carefully" She stepped directly in front of Lena, and tried to hold Lena's hands in hers, but Lena backed away.

Kara sighed heavily, "It has absolutely nothing to do with your last name Lena. You know me better than that by now. It has everything to do with the fact that the people who know who I truly am, are in incredible danger. There are people who would use you to get to me. I didn't tell you, because I am trying to protect you."

"Then why does my mother know?"

Kara shook her head in frustration, "She told you?"

"No, I saw you glance at her when I asked you about Mon-El on the ship, It wasn't hard to figure out why she looked so smug when I confronted you about Mon-El"

Kara sighed again, "She figured it out and held it over my head. She was convinced that you would figure it out on your own and that it would destroy our friendship"

Of course Mother has ulterior motives in withholding that information from me. She's hoping I will go running to her. Lena stared at her friend, "My question remains, Kara. Were you ever going to tell me the truth?"

Kara looked at her with tears in her eyes, "Lena..."

She shook her head, "I honestly don't know. I wanted to, so many times. It just came down to the fact that telling is far more dangerous for us both"

"Because I am a Luthor"

"No, because you are my closest friend... and you mean..." Kara hesitates, and amends her statement, "your friendship means the world to me"

"All your other *"close"* friends know Kara. You've told them all"

"And I've nearly lost them all Lena, more than once." Kara was clearly exasperated.

"I don't believe you Kara. Somehow you believed telling everyone else was worth the risk, but me? Me you leave in the dark" Lena's tone is quickly spiraling out of control. She took a deep breath, her demeanor becoming cold and calculating as she stared her friend down.

"Because it kept you safe!"

"No, it's because you don't trust me. Deep down, you still see me as a Luthor first and you always will" Lena turns and stomped away, yanking open Kara's door.

In her haste to leave, she almost missed Kara's final words, "I'm afraid... of losing you"

She hesitated, turning to Kara and her heart wrenched at the tears in the blonde's eyes, "You should have thought of that before you decided to keep the truth from me."

She slammed the door, and heard a tremendous crash from behind Kara's closed apartment door followed by a loud curse as she stormed away.

She climbed into her car and silently fumed all the way home. She grasped her house keys so tightly in her fists, that she was almost sure she's drawing blood. When her driver pulled up in front of her place, she climbed out hastily and slammed the car door hard enough for the car to shake. She was oblivious to her surroundings. Her hands trembled violently as she tried to get her key into her door. She dropped her keys twice, cursing under her breath, while fresh tears blurred her vision. She finally managed to get the door open and stepped inside.

As she turned to close the door behind her something cold and metallic slammed into her skull and arms grabbed her hastily as she crumples. She glanced up and managed to catch glimpse of the ski mask before her vision darkened into black.

Sometime later, her awareness returned. Her head hung drooped forward, she's glanced at her feet and saw that she was bound tightly to the chair. Wiggling her hands, she confirmed that her hands were bound tightly behind her back, and a gag was fitted tightly over her mouth. She wanted scream from frustration. This was now the second time she had been caught off guard and attacked. She wondered briefly who had taken her this time. No doubt, another group of aliens, or alien haters wanting her expertise.

She took a deep breath and tried to calm the rising panic in her chest, *Supergirl will come for me, she always does.* Normally that thought would comfort her, but all it did in that moment was make her heart clench painfully. *Kara.* She immediately regretted her anger towards the blonde.

Kara had done nothing but protect her, time and time again, coming to her defense, protecting her, showing up to save the day just in time, every single time. Now she knew how Supergirl always knew she was in trouble. Her best friend was also her greatest ally, and instead of being grateful for her trust, and her unwavering faith, she

had trampled all over their friendship.

Part of her wondered if Kara would still come for her. She didn't even know how long it had been since she vanished. She lifted her head and groaned at the throbbing sensation the movement caused. Glancing around the room, she groaned again, in frustration this time. There was no window in the room. It appeared she was in some sort of office. She glanced around, taking in the bookshelves placed against the four walls of the room. She was seated in a chair on the other side of a large ornate oak desk. An office chair sat empty across the desk from her. She glanced at the desktop unit on one end of the desk. It was neat and clean in the office, and appeared to be cleaned and occupied frequently, given the lack of dust on any of the surfaces near enough for her to see. She tried to locate anything she could use as a weapon or at the very least get her bonds removed. There was absolutely nothing useful in sight. *Of course not.* She thought bitterly. *The goons who took me were professionals.*

She tried to work her fingers over her bindings, only to realize they were handcuffs. Leaning forward she was un-surprised to see her feet were tightly zip-tied to the chair. *Damn it.* She knew they had already removed the bobby-pins from her hair, as it was hanging in her face. She let out an exhausted sigh and resigned herself to the fact that she would have to be rescued. She just needed to find a way to distract her captors and keep them busy long enough for Kara to find her.

There was no doubt in her mind that Kara would come for her. She always had before, even when they had had a falling out. She sighed heavily, wishing she had stayed and listened to Kara. Something about Kara's last words to her earlier in the day stuck with her. *"I'm afraid... of losing you"*. Initially she had thought Kara meant their friendship, but now, with nothing to do but replay their conversation over and over again in her mind, she wondered if there wasn't more to it. Kara had seemed genuinely afraid, and of far more than losing Lena as a friend. *"You mean... your friendship means the world to me"*

She groaned in frustration at them both. She wasn't sure why it had wounded her so that Kara had kept it from her. She knew knowing Supergirl's true identity was risky. She knew that in most cases, the people who knew either had already figured it out, or had been told

very early in Kara's "coming out" process. She knew Kara was far more careful about protecting her identity than she had been initially. And she knew that Kara was telling the truth when she had told her that keeping it from her was an effort to protect her. But still, it stung.

She was far more invested in her friendship with Kara than she was letting on, and she knew it. The strength of her feelings for the blonde surprised and alarmed her. She had never had anyone successfully get past the walls she had erected to protect her heart before, nor had she had someone so determined to protect and defend her, even at great personal and professional risk to herself.

She worked steadily at trying to loosen the bonds on her feet while she contemplated her relationship with Kara. Finally she gave an exasperated sigh, muttering a curse under her breath.

The door behind her opened suddenly and immediately the stench of stale cigarettes and men's cologne overwhelmed her senses.

"Struggling is useless, Miss Luthor. You are far better off conserving your energy. Believe me when I say you are going to need it"

A tall thin man in a charcoal grey suit stepped around her and approached the chair opposite her. She gasped and recoiled in horror when he turned to face her. His face was covered in scar tissue. She could clearly see the plastic covering that covered his right cheek and most of his nose. Sharp eyes sat below thin eyebrows. Not one inch of his face was untouched by severe scarring.

He chuckled at her response, a small wheezing sound at the end of each abbreviated sound from his throat "It's quite rude to stare Miss Luthor"

He descended into a coughing fit and she straightened her posture, her mask dropping into place, "who the hell are you?"

"Let's just say... I'm a friend of your mother's" This statement seemed to amuse him greatly.

Lena sighed, "Of course Lillian would have something to do with this. Tell me what does she want this time?"

He smirked, "Not that mother dear. I'm referring to your birth mother"

She swallowed, "My birth mother is dead"

"Let me guess, Lillian told you that?"

She glared at him, refusing to take the bait and he opened a drawer in front of him, removing a lighter and a pack of cigarettes. He tapped the cigarette box against the desk before pulling one out, "Mind if I smoke?"

"Would it matter if I did?" She retorted.

He seemed to contemplate her response for a moment before responding, " Probably not"

"Then be my guest" Her tone was dripping with sarcasm.

He laughed, "Interesting choice of words Miss Luthor considering your current position, don't you think?"

She huffed in impatience, "Why am I here?"

" Your mother had an agreement with me. She violated that agreement, knowing full well what the consequences would be. Unfortunately for you, her the consequences for her lack of discretion fall on your shoulders."

" My birth mother died when I was four."

He shook his head and sighed, " Even after everything you have learned about Lillian Luthor, you still insist on believing her lies. Why is that?"

Lena growled, " I looked for my mother for years after leaving home precisely because I didn't believe Lillian Luthor. I found absolutely

nothing aside from an unmarked urn at a mausoleum in Washington DC. my birth mother is dead. So again, I ask. Why. Am. I. Here?"

" You are mistaken. She's very much alive, though for how much longer is a matter of debate."

He set down his cigarette without having taken a single puff, " As to why you find yourself tied to that chair, I already told you. She betrayed me. And I intend to make her pay for that decision by hurting her the only way she can be hurt. By hurting the people she cares about."

She shakes her head, confused by this new information, "You are mistaken, this exercise is pointless. If she cared about me, she would not have faked her own death and sent me away to be raised by the most evil family in America."

He laughed, " That's where you are sorely mistaken Miss Luthor. She sent you away to protect you. And it was not her who faked her death. Lillian Luthor created that elaborate rabbit trail for you to follow. She feared the day you realized you had anyone other than her who cared about you."

" Lillian Luthor cares about no one but herself."

" True enough, but she cared enough about you, about the Luthor legacy to ensure your identity was hidden from us both. I only learned that you survived our attempt on your life recently."

Her head span at that revelation but he continued oblivious to her shock, " Imagine my surprise to learn that not only had you managed to survive your brush with death, but were now the heir of the legendary Luthor family empire. Believe me, I intend to find out exactly how your mother pulled that little miracle off. There's no way you should have survived given the extent of your injuries"

"What are you talking about?" her heartbeat pounded in her ears.

He was reveling in her reaction, "Your mother was too close to the truth. So we decided to send a message for her to back off."

He stops to evaluate her, then grinning states, “ You honestly don’t remember, do you? You were four years old. Your babysitter Nancy was on the couch while you played with legos in front of the television. We killed Nancy, shot her dead in front of you. Then we shot you and left you to bleed out on the oriental rug. Until a few months ago, we believed we were successful.”

He pauses and toys with the cigarette in the ashtray, “ Then, a few months ago, we suddenly started hearing about rising star, Lena Luthor, heir to the Luthor legacy, CEO of the newly rebranded L-Corp. As soon as I saw your face on the news, I knew who you were. We’ve been watching you ever since. And we started questioning your mother’s loyalty. Afterall, if she had managed to hide your existence from us for 19 years, what else was she hiding? Turns out, quite a bit.”

She shakes her head, “ My birth mother is alive, and has been working for you this whole time?”

He sighed, “Surprising isn’t it? Though I would hardly say she’s been working for us, given our investigation of her activities over the last few weeks, I would hardly say she’s working *for* us at all. If anything, she’s been cleverly delaying our plans for years, right under my nose.”

“And now you intend to make me pay for her choices”

He looked at her solemnly, “ I intend to make her understand the sting of betrayal, and the pain of watching the ones you love most die a most painful death, knowing full well the blame rests firmly on her shoulders”

She shivered at the chilling words and he looks immensely pleased at her reaction, “ If that’s the case, why am I not dead yet?”

He smirks. “ Because I am a patient man Miss Luthor, and the game is not yet over. I have need of your... unique skill set. Rest assured, your death will come.”

“ What’s the point of keeping me alive and telling me all of this?”

“ I want you to know how futile your life has been. I want you to suffer, knowing your end is coming, knowing that your mother is out there, desperately trying to find you, and when she does, we will be ready for her. I will kill you as she watches.”

He leans forward, grinning, “And then, Miss Luthor, I will take her life as well, in the most painful way imaginable.”

He pauses for effect, before standing and heading for the door. Just before he closes the door behind him he states, “ I’m going to burn you both alive”.

6. When It Rains, It Pours

Notes for the Chapter:

super-long chapter. Oops? was working on this in between my massive work project and constant pre-memorial day crazy phone calls. So... LOL. Still, I'm actually fairly happy with this chapter. let me know what you think.

Kara stared after her best friend as she stormed out of her loft. Kara wanted to yell, or cry. She wasn't sure. All she knew was she was completely overwhelmed with fear at the news Lena apparently had deduced. Not because she was afraid of Lena, she was terrified for her. Knowing Kara's identity put her at immeasurable risk and Kara was already struggling to protect those who did know.

Yanking her glasses off of her face in frustration, she promptly regretted the impulsive decision when she accidentally lasered her phone off the table across the room into the vase on the table. It shattered loudly and she cursed.

Approaching the table, she could see that not only was her phone utterly destroyed in her rage, but melted into the table itself. She had no idea how she was going to explain that one to anyone.

Sighing heavily, she put up the groceries Lana had brought with her and tried her best to clean up the monumental mess she had made of her apartment. She swept up the glass, wiped up the water from the flowers Winn had given her after she had to send Mon-El away. She sat in a chair when she had finished and stared at the massive hole in her table where her phone was now embedded. If anyone needed to get ahold of her, they couldn't. Sighing, she changed out of her pajamas and dressed in something more appropriate.

She was interrupted by a frantic knock on her door. She hastily fastened the last buttons on her blouse and tipped her glasses down, more aware of her emotions and intent this time, she realized her sister was on the other side, in a complete panic.

She opens the door and Alex pushes past her swiftly, “ Thank God you’re okay. You weren’t answering your phone and with everything going on, I panicked. I mean, you’re Kryptonian and everything but I have no idea if you are susceptible to anything going on out there right now. And you’ve gotten a cold before, so who knows, right? and on top of it all, not only were you not answering my calls but we can’t get ahold of Lena either...”

“Wait, back up slow down Alex? What’s going on?” She grabs her sister by the shoulders and directs her to sit down in a chair. She curses under her breath when Alex’s eyes immediately go to Kara’s phone melted into the table.

“That can wait a minute, want to explain why your phone is melted into the table?” she points an accusing finger at the phone, her eyebrow arched in concern.

Kara shrugs, “ I... got.. upset.”

Alex gives a look that clearly orders her to explain further, so she continues with a sigh, “ Lena came over this morning. She... she knows”

Alex tensed visibly, “What?! Kara we discussed this”

“ I didn’t tell her. She figured it out on her own, just like Ms. Grant. I told you she needed to know, but you and J’onn were convinced it was more dangerous to tell her than to keep it from her. And now she’s really hurt and thinks I didn’t tell her because she’s a Luthor. I tried to explain but she was too upset and ran out of here about an hour ago.”

Alex freezes, “An hour ago? She didn’t go home did she? Do you have any idea at all where she would have gone?”

Kara senses the her sisters heart rate increased, “Alex, what?” Panic rises in her throat, “Did something happen to Lena?”

Alex shakes her head, “We don’t know yet”

“What do you mean, you don’t know?” Her voice rose in fear and exasperation. “ If she’s in danger, I need to go, right now”

“Kara, calm down, we are doing everything we can to locate her right now. Believe it or not, it's a top priority for the DEO that we locate her. And before you ask, she's not a suspect. We need her help. We tapped into her security system this morning, trying to figure out why she wasn't answering her phones. All her cameras are down, and they have been for a couple hours. The camera's outside the building show her leaving her apartment almost three hours ago now, and a few minutes later, every camera on the street went dark, even traffic lights.”

That wasn't good at all. If someone was knocking out all the cameras in the vicinity, someone has something dangerous up their sleeves, and worse, were extremely tech savvy and careful. “ Why were you even tapping into her cameras, or mine in the first place”

“ If you would slow down for about five seconds, I could tell you that” Alex retorted.

“Wait, Someone other than you can access those cameras and shut them off?”

“Apparently, yes, Winn has no idea how they got past the DEO's firewalls”

Kara froze, “ If they managed to access those cameras through the DEO... than they...”

“Likely know who you are, and have access to our files? Yeah, it's bad, I don't need you to tell me that. What I do need...”.

Kara interrupts her sister again, “She left here upset Alex, and if the cameras were down that long, and she went straight home, which knowing her, she did, she would have walked blindly into a trap. Please tell me you thought to send an agent over there”

“I did, they stopped by twice this morning. She wasn't there. We checked your cameras and saw she came here. Then moments after she arrived, yours went down too. So now can you imagine why I would be so panicked when I came over here? I thought something had happened to you”

Kara barely heard her. She had to fix this, “I’m fine. I have to go find Lena”

Kara turned to head for the door but Alex grabbed her before she got far, “Kara, relax, we will find her. I have Maggie and Winn on it. But we need Supergirl, right now. All hell has been breaking loose at the hospitals, honestly, how have you not heard anything that’s going on?”

“I’ve been a bit distracted Alex” Kara points out tiredly, “I just lost Mon- El, I won’t lose Lena too”

Alex pauses, gives her an odd look before quietly approaching Kara and pulling her into a hug, “Kara, I love you, and I know you are hurting over Mon- El, and terrified for Lena, and believe me, I am worried about her too, and I swear to you, I will do whatever it takes to get Lena home safely, but right now the people of National City, hell... the whole world, myself included needs you to get your head back in the game right now or you are not going to be any good to anyone”

Kara could barely hear Alex’s words over the roar in her ears, “Lena needs me Alex”

“Kara! People are dying, of diseases that were supposed to be extinct. Vaccinations that were supposed to protect people from deadly diseases are making people deathly ill. Would you at least come down to the DEO and let us brief you before you run out there half cocked against a danger you know absolutely nothing about?”

Kara shudders as Alex’s words finally sink in and agrees that she needs to be briefed at the very least, even though she’s fighting the growing gut feeling that Lena was in serious danger once again, and every instinct in her tells her she doesn’t have time to waste, “Fine, but we are flying”

“Good, because we can’t drive right now anyway, roads are backing up while accidents pile up. You had to be seriously out of it to not hear any of it this morning”

Kara simply gave her a look and Alex nodded, “Right, okay, come on.

You need to change, fast”

Kara arched an eyebrow and yanked her shirt open, and discarded her glasses. She swiftly took everything but her Supergirl uniform off, closed her eyes and took a deep breath, muttering, “ For the love of Rao, you better hold on until I can get to you Lena” before wrapping an arm around her sister’s waist and hurtling toward the sky.

The flight to the DEO went quickly, and Kara was alarmed at the amount of traffic and chaos on the roads below her. She flinched when Alex cursed, “Christ, this is escalating quickly”.

Kara nodded and pressed forward, focusing on trying to get them to the DEO as quickly as possible. A few moments later she landed outside the bar the DEO was still having to use as a temporary base since the actual DEO base was still compromised by the Daxomite attack the previous week.

Releasing her sister gently, Kara shook her head, “ I really wish we could go more than one week without some city, national or world threatening disaster”

Alex sighed, the same exhaustion lining her own features, “ I know, but this is the world we live in”

The sisters enter the dark bar and immediately Maggie has her arms around Kara, startling her, “ Oh thank God you are okay. When we couldn’t get ahold of you, we feared the worst”

Still unused to the new level of friendship between Maggie and herself, Kara gently hugged the dark haired woman on the back awkwardly and pulls away clearing her throat, “ I’m fine Maggie, any word on Lena?”

Maggie must have heard the fear in Kara’s voice, “Not yet, but we *will* find her Danvers, you can count on that”

Winn glanced up from the computer, “Uh.. Guys...” he hesitated when he sees Kara, his voice wavering slightly, “ I’ve got a location on Lena’s phone and I checked the traffic cams in the area...”

Kara all but ran over, “Where is she, is she okay?”

He shook his head and pointed to the screen, “Better see for yourself... It.. doesn’t look good”

Her eyes searched the image in front of her and she gasped, horrified when she spotted Lena in the backseat of a black SUV, duck-tape covering her mouth. She looked unconscious but it was hard to make out much more detail in the grainy image due to the angle.

“Where is this?” Alex barked.

“Corner of Washington and Delong” Winn pointed to the street sign in the photo.

“Did you manage to pull a plate?” Maggie asked.

He nods, “ Way ahead of you ,the first thing I did was run it against stolen plates. It’s owner reported it stolen early this morning”

“Shit!” Alex yelled before calming enough to ask, jabbing her finger at the screen, “How long ago?”

Winn glanced at the time stamp, “About forty minutes ago”

“They could be anywhere by now.” Kara hated the fear in her own voice.

Alex shook her head and turned to her sister, “Ordinarily, yes. But today, it’s highly unlikely they got very far. There’s no way they made it out of town with the traffic like it is.” She turns to another agent, “ Okay, If it hasn’t been done already.. I want the passenger planes grounded until further notice. No one comes or goes until we give the go ahead. Winn use the traffic interface, I want every hit on that license plate in the last hour. I want to know where they were headed. Maggie, take Kara to J’onn to be debriefed. I am going to Lena’s apartment, maybe we will get lucky and someone will have made a mistake, left a clue behind”

“Not likely,” Winn stated softly, “These guys are professionals Alex. I don’t have a single shot that captures their faces. My guess? The only reason we know Lena was in that car at all is because they wanted us to know they have her”

Kara sobs and Alex wraps an arm around her while glaring at Winn, “ They always make mistakes, and I promise you” She meets Kara’s gaze, “We will find it, and track them down”

Maggie places a hand on Kara’s arm, “Danvers, I know it’s hard, believe me, I get it, trying to hold it together long enough to rescue the people you care about, but Lena needs you to pull it together, we all do”

Kara nods, remembering what a mess she and Maggie had been when Alex had been taken. She sniffles once more, takes a deep breath and wipes her eyes, “Okay, let’s get this debrief over with, I need to be out there, busy”

Alex releases her sister gently and Kara can feel everyone’s eyes on her as J’onn appears from another room, “ Kara, you are okay!”

The relief in his voice was enough to have Kara go directly to him and let him wrap his arms around her, “ We will find her Kara, it’s going to be alright.”

He rubbed soothing circles into her back for a moment before straightening, “Alright folks, listen up. I just heard from our operative.. It’s worse than we feared”

“Guardian?” Alex asked and J’onn nodded.

Kara’s brow furrowed, “ I’ve heard that name, whispered around here before, but you’ve never explained who that is or what their mission is”

“Because it’s highly classified.”

“ Is Guardian coming in?” Alex asked, worry evident in her expression.

J’onn nodded, “We are bringing her in. We spotted her leaving D.C not long ago. It looks like she’s headed to Maine. I’ve authorized a plane to go pick Guardian up. And it looks like we won’t be bringing her in alone. She’s going to insist on bringing reinforcements” His expression was unreadable.

Alex nodded firmly, "That's probably for the best, We need all the help we can get J'onn"

He shook his head, looking oddly uneasy, " Guardian is... trying to find DS" He glances around the room and lowers his voice, "If she finds her, we are going to end up bringing DS with her, along with more we've never met, if she can convince them to help"

Alex tensed momentarily and immediately relaxed, " If Guardian thinks we need DS, then I trust her judgement. I trust DS as well. They both saved all of our hides a few years ago"

"Who is DS? And who the hell is Guardian? I thought James was Guardian"

J'onn shook his head, " We code-named James as Guardian to cover the tracks of the original guardian. Hopefully if anyone looked into our files, they would run into James Olsen first and not keep digging. The original guardian... her identity had to be protected at all costs"

Kara asked, " So is she and DS alien? Like me?"

J'onn shook his head, "Guardian is human, DS and her people are not aliens... at least not in the typical sense of the word. They aren't from this universe originally, but... " He sighs heavily, " They have... abilities, and will be able to assist with maintaining order, and hunting down the people who took Lena. Guardian knows who is behind it, and believe me, no one is more motivated to get Lena home safely than Guardian is"

J'onn motions to Kara, "We need to debrief you, and prepare you for the group you are about to meet, away from..." He motions to the bar which is packed with agents hard at work.

Kara nodded and followed J'onn to the small office in the back of the bar, " Have a seat Kara"

She nodded numbly and follows his instructions. He seated himself across from her and releases a heavy sigh, "What I am about to tell you is highly classified, and... deeply personal. I need to be able to trust your discretion"

Kara noticed the way J'onn was fidgeting with the file in front of him, "You know you can"

He slid the file across the table to her and leaned back in his chair. "How much do you know about the DEO?"

Kara snorted, "Very little, as I keep becoming increasingly aware"

He nodded, "Best start at the beginning then..."

He took a deep breath and began, "In 1947, there was an... incident just outside Roswell, New Mexico. While the US military later claimed that it was a weather balloon that crashed out there, it was, in reality, the first UFO crash in the modern era that was on our radar, and especially on US soil. Shortly after that, the DEO was founded to investigate incidents involving UFO's. And eventually we branched out, to what we do now, registering, locating and policing the Alien population on this planet while simultaneously protecting humanity from the threats the far more dangerous aliens pose. We have prevented a number of plots to colonize earth over the years. Around 1960 we became aware of a syndicate that was working with alien invaders, undermining our work and coming up with lucrative plots to colonize our planet, via complicated technology and genetics."

Kara lifts a hand, "Not to be rude J'onn, but what does this have to do with Lena's kidnapping and the health crisis outside?"

J'onn sighed, "Everything. The syndicate that arose in the 1960's still exists and it's headed by the most dangerous man alive. No one knows his name. He is only known as CSM."

"CSM? And you are telling me that he's behind everything that is going on outside?"

"Yes, and according to Guardian, he is the one who currently has Lena as well"

Kara tensed, "Why?"

"Let me finish, please."

Kara glared at him and sat back petulantly, “ Continue”

“ This syndicate has come up with numerous plots over the years and we have always been a few steps behind them, trying to stop their plots, and only succeeding half the time. Until we started working with Guardian, and working with a small team at the FBI who worked on so called, X- Files. The X- Files deals primarily with the paranormal, but they have often ended up, in the course of their investigations run across plots by this syndicate and have helped stopped numerous plots. The FBI keeps finding excuses to shut down the operation because they are trying to limit the number of people within government who are aware of the existence of extraterrestrial like on our planet. About twenty- five years ago we started working directly with a few agents at the FBI, providing them with resources and allowing them to pass us cases that the FBI prevented them from pursuing. Guardian is one of those agents. She is the longest standing undercover operative of the DEO.”

He paused for a moment, checking to ensure Kara was still following, and she nodded briefly.

He continued, “ Not long after we made her an operative, she became... involved with Lionel Luthor. They had an affair, and this operative became pregnant. Obviously, she left the FBI’s National City office not long after, and for several years, Lionel was unaware that his mistress was even alive, let alone had given birth to his child”

Kara stared at him as she processed this information, “Lena’s birth mother.. Is Guardian? She told me her mother was dead.”

“ Lena has no reason to believe otherwise, thanks in large part to a clever deception created by Lillian Luthor, and one we allowed to stand, as it protected Guardian, and Lena.”

“Why is Guardian coming in now? Oh Rao, is she why Lena was taken?” Kara’s temper began to rise, “ She endangered her daughter, didn't she?”

“Kara, listen to me. Guardian faced an impossible choice. She thought Lena was safe. They tried to kill her when she was four, and

as far as Guardian knew, they still believed her daughter to be dead. She went to the FBI, and warned them about the Spartan Virus. CSM retaliated by kidnapping Lena”

" Why? What good does that do? Why didn't she come to you? It makes no sense. None of this makes sense”

“Guardian joined CSM, undercover of course, ten years ago. She's been feeding us information on the syndicate's activities and we have done everything we can to delay their plans or stop them altogether. Over half the intel we act on, comes directly from her. And now, CSM knows she never truly joined him. He's furious. And he's afraid. Lena... is unique. She has her mother's intelligence and ingenuity. And after the hack this morning, CSM knows Lena has been assisting the DEO. that puts her in terrible jeopardy. He took her to prevent her from stopping this virus”

“ How could Lena possibly stop this Virus, when we know nothing about it?”

“ Not true. Thanks to Guardian and her friends at the FBI, we know that it's a result of government mandated and enforced mass vaccinations. They introduced the virus in the vaccines, and it removed sequences of DNA that produce the antibodies that gives us immunity to diseases. Only those who have had their DNA genetically altered and mixed with Alien DNA have the genes required to fight off the Spartan Virus.”

“I still don't understand why Lena would be able to prevent this”

“Several years ago, when Lena last tried to track down her birth mother, she had her own DNA tested. To everyone's surprise, she found Alien DNA. Over the last few years, she's been working to separate it, to manipulate and replicate it. It's why the DEO has been keeping such a close eye on her. At first, we feared perhaps she was working with the syndicate, but over the last few months, we realized she's trying to understand how she ended up with Alien DNA and why.”

“So was she able to replicate it?”

“Yes, and she had it stored in an underground bunker outside National City. I’ve had agents watching the bunker for some time. When they didn’t check in this morning, we sent more agents over immediately but it was already too late. They were overrun.”

Kara stiffened, “Let me guess, it’s all been taken”

J’onn nodded, “Are you starting to understand what we are up against here? CSM leaves nothing to chance. He fully intends to wipe out the human population with the exception of those whom he has allowed to be taken, and their DNA manipulated. If we don’t stop him, the vast majority of humanity will be wiped off the planet.”

“What are we going to do?” Kara was exhausted. More and more this was sounding like an insurmountable task.

“ We are trying to find where CSM is holding Lena. Guardian is on her way, with powerful allies who should be able to help us take down the syndicate, and hopefully come up with a way to get our hands on the Alien DNA again. My agents are working on a plan to mass distribute it. And we are trying to locate another FBI agent, we suspect that CSM may have her as well.”

“Why?”

J’onn paused, before stating quietly, “ CSM told Guardian he intends to harm everyone she cares about to make her pay for exposing his plot.”

“And you think he has this FBI agent. Who is she to Guardian?”

“ She’s... a close friend of hers, and unbeknownst to Guardian, she and her ex husband are also DEO operatives. If he doesn’t have them already, he will soon”

Kara sighed, “So what do you need me to do?”

“ I need you to ensure that Guardian has no trouble landing safely. I fear CSM knows she’s coming for him. And with the level of planning that went into this plot, it would not surprise me if he makes an attempt to take her as well, in fact, I’m counting on him trying”

“ When will they arrive?”

He checked his watch, “ O’ 600 tommorow morning.”

“Tomorrow morning?” Kara panicked, “ How do we know it won’t be too late by then?”

“ We don’t. But Guardian hasn’t even reached DS yet. And it’s going to take time to get DS on board with this, if she’s even there”

“So basically, what you are telling me, is that Guardian is going to Maine to track down some person code named DS who may or may not be able to help us? Lena can’t wait that long for a series of maybe’s. This is her life we are talking about J’onn!”

J’onn sighed wearily, “ I know you are worried about her, and I am doing everything I can on this end Kara. But if Guardian believes we need DS to stop this, than we need her. I don’t like sitting on my hands anymore than you do. The best thing we can do right now, is get out there and make sure we are getting people to the hospitals and getting them the care they need. Tomorrow morning, you report to the edge of National City airspace and escort them in.”

He pointed to the file in front of Kara, “ Everything we have on CSM, Guardian and DS is in that file. Read it, get to know them as much as you can. Figure out the best way to protect them coming in. For the next several hours, that’s your job, to come up with how to get those two and whoever else they get on board here safely. That file does not leave this room. When you are done, report to Alex for orders.”

“Where are you going?”

“To get in touch with Guardian, and make sure she knows we are sending a plane to her. She’s been.. skittish at best in regards to trusting us lately. I’m afraid my predecessor significantly strained our relationship with her when he learned Lena was her daughter. I am doing what I can to repair that relationship, and prove to her she can trust us to help her get Lena home safely”

Kara settled back in the chair and began to read. She needed as much information as possible if she was going to come up with a plan to

find and save Lena.

Notes for the Chapter:

oh. side note for reading:

CSM- stands for cigarette smoking man. You never learn his real name in the X- Files, and throughout the lore he is always referred to by that name and the fandom shortens that to CSM, so... I made that his code-name

DS- Dark Swan, for those who didn't initially figure that one out ;-)

share your thoughts on the story so far in the comments... and thanks for reading ;-)

7. Uncomfortable Truths

Notes for the Chapter:

Warning: Angst ahead... and it's another lengthy chapter. LOL. Oh... and um... a plot twist is hidden in there too?

Monica closed the door gently behind her and headed to the bed. She had already showered and was once again struck by the generosity she had been shown upon her surprise arrival here. She wasn't sure she would have been quite as gracious as Regina was upon meeting Emma's ex. She smiled when she spotted the fresh silk pajamas laid out for her at the end of the bed. She changed swiftly, grateful that they fit. As she buttoned the pajama top She saw the burner cell light up and tensed.

She watched it ring for a moment, hesitant to answer the blocked number. No one had the number to that phone aside from the DEO. She knew they would call her eventually, but had hoped she had more time.

It stopped ringing for a moment, then promptly began again. Sighing, she picked up the small phone and answered, "Hello"

"Hello Monica."

She sighed, "J'onn"

She waited patiently for the voice on the other end to continue and she didn't wait long, "I'm assuming from the fact that your location is now stationary that you were able to locate Dark Swan?"

She tensed, "You knew I was coming here?" She glanced around the room, locating her things, preparing to leave if necessary, "Monica, relax. We are here to help. We know about Lena. we have our best agents trying to pinpoint her location now"

"Since when does the DEO care about what happens to my daughter?"

“I am not my predecessor Monica. I’ve been keeping tabs on Lena for years. She’s been an invaluable resource to the DEO for the last year or so. You were right, she may be a Luthor, but she’s still a Reyes deep down.”

Monica scoffed, “Of course she’s a Reyes, she’s my daughter, not the daughter of those monsters”

“Monica, answer the question please. Were you able to locate Dark Swan?”

Monica sighed, “ Yes I was. Although... She’s hardly dark *anything* anymore”

“ Can she help us?”

“ She’s willing to help me get my daughter back, yes”

“Good. I am sending a plane to pick you up.”

“ The DEO has planes now? Since when?”

J’onn laughed softly, “ No. you know our budget has only gotten smaller over the years. A local citizen... was willing to help out. The plane will have a CATCO decal on it. There should be a detail of agents waiting for you at the airport.”

Monica tabled her surprise that Cat Grant was now involved with the DEO as well, “Which one? Surely not Portland”

“ With everything going on, you will never make it to Portland. You are going to Sanford Seacoast. It’s much smaller, and closer. Your flight arrives at 6 am sharp and will remain on the runway for no longer than 30 minutes. Make sure everyone who is coming is present and onboard. If you could send us a list of who we should expect and their contribution to the effort on the secure server tonight, that would save us considerable time. We will debrief you all on the plane”

“Anything else J’onn?”

“ No. Are you safe for tonight? Have you had any symptoms?”

Monica sighed, “ No i haven't, and I doubt I will. I was... inoculated with the Alien DNA. I should be fine.”

“Good. That’s good news. What about the individuals you are bringing?”

“ They’ve never been vaccinated, so their DNA should be intact. That doesn’t mean they won’t get sick though.”

A soft knock sounded at her door and Emma peeked her head in, “You need anything before we head to bed?”

Monica shook her head, covering the phone with her hand, “No. We have a plane that will be waiting for us at Sanford Seacoast at 6 am.”

Emma nodded sharply, “ That’s certainly a better plan than trying to get through traffic. I’ve been checking the news.” She points to Monica’s phone, and whispers, “ Who’s that?”

“It’s J’onn. Would you like to speak to him?”

Emma nods, turns and motions Regina into the room behind her. Monica smirks at the fact that Regina wasn’t letting Emma out of her sight. Regina gives her an odd look and she hands the phone over to Emma and nods to the chair by her bed, “ Wanna sit?”

Regina nods and closes the door softly.

Emma takes the phone and states, “J’onn, what am I getting my family into here?”

Monica watches Emma’s facial expressions change as J’onn fills her in. Her jaw tenses and ticks and Monica glances at Regina to see her watching Emma intently, concern written all over her features. Emma is growing more tense and angry by the moment.

“ Understood. We will be there. But I need some assurances.” She sighs, “ Yes, J’onn assurances. I am helping Monica. Understood? And we do this our way. The DEO is welcome to work with us, but you will not get in my way, is that clear?”

He says something and her tone becomes harsh, “ I do not answer to

you or anyone else at the DEO. I am doing a dear friend a personal favor and you will respect that. When I say we go, you will let us.”

Monica could hear J’onn’s sigh and Emma relaxes marginally, “Now, how do we protect ourselves from the viruses?”

She listens, and Monica glances at Regina who is fidgeting nervously, “No, that’s correct, they haven’t been vaccinated. I grew up in this world so I have, but...” “ She pauses and listens then frowns, “ I will talk to Monica, see what we can figure out.”

“No, J’onn, I’m not sending my family over there without me. It’s out of the question”

He argues and she gets angry, “Absolutely not. I will not send my family into danger and not be there to protect them” Monica easily identified the tension in Emma’s shoulders and Regina clearly did as well.

“Emma...” Regina says softly and Emma shakes her head, “I’m going, and that’s final. We will figure out how to protect me from the viruses. We should be fine though, our family just spent quite a bit of time in a world with quite a bit more radiation than this one, so perhaps that will give our immunity a boost.”

That seems to give J’onn pause and he seems to deflate given the way Emma smirks in victory, “ Fine, 6 am Sharp, we will be there”

She hands the phone back to Monica and sits on her bed as Monica hangs up with J’onn. She tosses the phone lightly across the bed and sits beside Emma with a heavy sigh, “This isn’t going to be easy. CSM definitely has Lena, and I have a feeling J’onn isn’t telling me everything. I have the strong feeling this is about to get worse, if that’s even possible”

“And we will be there when it does” Regina states calmly. Monica wondered what these two had been through that this situation didn’t ruffle their feathers. They were calm, and it helped her relax as well, however marginally.

Emma nods, “So... we need to figure out how to ensure everyone is

protected from the viruses out there. We can't take the fact that radiation will kill it for granted, nor can we take the immunity of the curse for granted"

Regina nods, " I have a blanket immunity potion in my vault I can replicate. It will take a few hours, so..."

Emma nodded swiftly, " I will help."

She holds up a hand to Monica's protest, "We can sleep on the plane Mon. And don't even think about offering to help. Knowing you, you haven't slept since this started. Regina and I can handle this"

Monica nods tiredly, " I could use some sleep"

"Then sleep dear, leave the details to us." Regina said kindly. She headed out of the room, gently squeezing Monica's arm in reassurance as she passed by, " You aren't alone anymore"

Tears sprang to her eyes at the gentleness in Regina's voice, " Thank you. I..."

Regina turned back to Monica and surprises them both when she engulfs Monica in a hug. Even Emma looks surprised by the gesture, though she recovers quickly and grins at the pair.

Regina releases her with a smile and tears in her own eyes, " We just got our own daughters back. We know the pain of being separated from those you love, and believe me, we won't rest until you know the contentment of your family being whole again as well"

Monica was overwhelmed by Regina's words and nods.

"Now get some sleep dear. We have a long day ahead of us" Regina ushers Emma out of the room and Monica crawls under the soft down covers, sighing as she drifted off to a dreamless sleep, Emma and Regina's reassurances just enough to help her relax.

She awoke a few short hours later to the sounds of movement downstairs. She groaned and rolled over to look at the clock. It was just after three in the morning. She crawled from under the warm comforter and nearly put her clothes from yesterday on when she realized that her clothes were not there and then spotted the clean outfit hung on the guest bedroom door. She grinned, easily recognizing that the outfit was what Emma had affectionately referred to as the “madam mayor” look. She swiftly dressed in the suit, grinning when it fit her form perfectly. She ran her fingers through her hair and grabbed her things, heading downstairs.

She followed the sounds of quiet chatter and the enticing scent of breakfast and coffee to the massive kitchen, and was greeted immediately by Raven, who pressed a fresh mug of coffee into her hands, “Nice outfit Agent Reyes”. Monica smirked at the teasing lilt to Raven’s voice and nodded her thanks to Regina who turned from a hot pan on the stove with a smile, “ It fits, good”

“Yes, it does, thank you. Your hospitality... is.. Overwhelming”

Regina waved her off, “ Don’t mention it. Your clothes have been washed and are packed, along with a few more outfits of mine to hold you over. I hope you don’t mind”

Monica shook her head, “ Not at all. I am grateful.”

Emma stepped carefully around Regina and passed Monica a hot plate with eggs bacon and toast, “ Eat up. We’ve got a long day ahead of us” Monica noted a tension in Emma’s shoulders and a sadness in her eyes that wasn’t there a few hours ago. She gave Emma a pointed look that clearly asked what was wrong but Emma ignored her and instead pointed to the table where a small vial and a glass of orange juice sat waiting on her, “ Just in case, everyone gets one,including you. I recommend downing it and chasing it with the orange juice”

Lexa looked up from her place at the far end of the table and nodded her agreement, her expression morphing into distaste at the memory of the vial's contents, “Definitely chase it with the orange juice, that stuff is terrible”

Monica laughed lightly.

“ That *stuff* as you so eloquently call it Alexandria, ” Regina stated with a smirk, “Will keep us all from catching any of the various diseases everyone else is currently suffering from.”

Lexa sighed, “Mom, please...”

Regina frowned for a moment and Monica caught the sadness in her eyes, “ Right, Lexa. I am sorry, I forgot dear. It's going to take time for me to get used to that again”

Emma tried to place a comforting hand on Regina’s shoulder and at first, the brunette leaned into the touch, her expression relaxing slightly before she pulled away rather abruptly, leaving the room with a stiffness in her shoulders. Emma stared after her with a mix of grief and longing and Monica frowned. Emma caught her watching and gave Monica a sad smile, stating softly, “ Her memories are back. She and Henry decided last night, and naturally everyone decided they wanted theirs back too. It’s... an adjustment”

Monica nodded, “Give her time.”

Emma sighed, “ I know...”

Monica squeezed Emma’s hand gently before sitting beside Lexa and Henry at the table. Henry was oddly quiet, and clearly distracted. He gave her a wobbly smile when she sat down and she returned it. He had been picking at his food since she came downstairs. Monica noticed the level of tension in the room for the first time. While on the surface, it was a normal friendly family interaction, there was grief and confusion hidden beneath. Monica glanced at Lexa, seeing that she was leaning into Clarke beside her. No one was talking much, and while they answered questions when addressed, everyone was avoiding direct eye contact with Emma. The blonde wore a brave face, but it was clearly hurting her deeply.

Henry continued to push food around on his plate while Monica ate quietly and when she suggested that he would need his energy later he gave her a pointed look, “ Why? I am being left behind again! and next thing I know, I could find out my memories were taken from me

as well, and have no idea what's going on out there, let alone in my own life"

Emma flinched at his words and started to respond with, "Henry. We've been over this, I know you are upset and you have every right to be..."

Monica stepped in, " Henry. You remember the conversation we had when you returned to Storybrooke and you called me after your memories returned?"

Emma seemed surprised by this news, " You called Monica?"

Monica nodded, " He was upset, and confused. He didn't understand why you and Regina hadn't told him he was her son, or that he had been adopted." She turns back to Henry, "You were hurt, and felt betrayed. You didn't understand why they had kept that from you."

Henry nodded slowly, "Yeah, I remember."

"Do you remember what I told you?"

He nodded again, " You told me that they were protecting me. That keeping it from me kept me safe, and prevented more pain than telling me would have"

"Exactly, This is no different. Emma made a choice. A choice that was extremely difficult. Her family was in more danger than ever before. And the only way she knew how to protect you, was to leave you with the one person who loves you just as much, and would do anything to protect you, so that she could focus on saving your sisters. Was it the best choice? We can never know that. Did it cause you pain? Yes. But before you rush to judgement, put yourself in her shoes. If it was you, and someone in your family was in danger, and you were the only one with the tools to save them, would you really choose differently?"

Henry wasn't willing to let it go so easily, " She left us here and allowed mom to marry *Robin*. Do you understand that? Mom married him! And had no idea that her true love was out there trying to put her family back together! Can you imagine getting your memories

back and realizing that not only did you live in another realm for several years, but when you were sent back home, you forgot your mom, and your other mom married a man she thought was her soulmate? Can you imagine what that does to you, to realize you called a man you thought you barely knew *Dad* for twenty years? That you had a little brother that you helped look out for, and who is now living with foster parents? That you watched your mom suffer through a miserable marriage for twenty years because she thought it was her destiny? To feel like there's a big gaping, person sized hole in your heart and not have any idea why? ”

He was angry and admittedly, reasonably so. Somehow she knew that his anger towards Emma in defense of his other mother was more a cover for the fear he felt over being abandoned. She glanced at Emma who looked more and more miserable as Henry raved on.

Monica sighed and opened her arms, un-surprised when Henry leaned into her and began to cry, “ I could have lost her and I never would have known she or my sisters existed!”

Monica rested her chin on the crown of his head and sighed, “ I know Henry. But you didn't. You are all home, safe and sound. And Emma isn't leaving you behind. I know it feels that way because of your newly recovered memories, but I think you know deep down what the truth is. You have to understand, and one day you will, the sacrifices a parent sometimes has to make for their children. Sometimes, giving them their best chance means walking away and letting them believe a lie that keeps them safe.”

She glanced over Henry's head and saw Regina standing in the doorway watching them, a flurry of emotions crossing her features more rapidly than Monica could interpret them. Monica looked at her and gently stated, “ I know you are hurting right now, and I can't imagine the pain those memories are bringing to the surface.” She nodded to the blonde seated across from her, keeping her gaze locked with Regina's, “ Emma will never tell you, because she always protects the people she loves, at her own expense, but it hurt her deeply, to make that choice. It's not easy for her either. Don't let her lose you over this because she suffers silently while bearing the brunt of the consequences for her choice to protect your family.”

Regina didn't react immediately. It took a moment for the warning Monica gave her sank in. She saw the brief flash of defensive anger, and then understanding on Regina's features before it morphed into something resembling gratitude. Regina glanced at Emma and Monica followed her gaze.

Emma was staring at the table, lost in her own memories, and from the look of it, waiting for the moment her family decided they had had enough of her. She was mentally preparing herself for the moment they left her behind. Regina sighed and sat in the chair next to Emma and took the blonde's hand gently in her own. Emma didn't acknowledge her, completely lost to the past.

Monica glanced around the table and noted the anger that had been present when she first entered was slowly softening into understanding on all of the kids faces. Lexa and Raven seemed to understand Emma's sacrifice more readily than Henry or Regina did, then again, they saw the sacrifices Emma had made firsthand. Lexa looked at her blonde mother with so much empathy, it twisted like a knife in Monica's chest. Raven's expression betrayed her loyalty torn between her two mothers. Clarke seemed to be wrestling with her own emotions and Monica wondered briefly what her story was.

Monica continued to focus on comforting Henry as best she could until he finally calmed down enough for her to release him gently, she silently picked up his plate of food and carried it to the microwave and reheated it before placing it in front of him with a gentle command, "Eat."

He nodded and ate in silence. Monica watched Emma thoughtfully for a moment before looking around the table and ordering quietly, "Everyone eat. You are going to need your strength, we have a long day ahead of us." She retrieved Regina's plate and set it down in front of the brunette, the command firmly implied. Regina huffed but complied, continuing to hold Emma's hand and trace circles across her knuckles with her free hand.

Monica ate quietly, humming in contentment at the way the food was prepared. She nods to Regina, "The eggs are fantastic"

"Emma made them" Regina responded softly. Hearing her name

from Regina seemed to snap Emma out of whatever daze she was in and she stared at her hand in surprise before turning to meet Regina's gaze.

With tears in her eyes, she whispered, "I'm so sorry. I know I won't ever be able to say that enough."

When Regina didn't immediately respond, Emma glanced at Monica, "I'm going to stay here, my family will be able to help you, but I think it's best if I remain behind so they can focus on the task at hand" Monica sees the pain in Emma's eyes and knows Emma is retreating within herself, throwing up her walls and getting ready to run. Regina sensed it too, and her grip on Emma's hand tightens when Emma tried to pull away and leave the table.

"Absolutely not Emma." Regina stated, her tone leaving no room for argument, "We said we would do it together from now on. You are not backing out of that now because you are afraid"

"Henry's right, He needs a parent here, Regina"

Regina's tone becomes more harsh and Emma flinches, "A couple of hours ago, you were furious when someone suggested that you should stay behind, and we already worked out an arrangement with your parents regarding Henry, so don't you dare pretend that this has anything to do with making sure Henry has someone here. You know as well as I do that he is more than capable of taking care of himself. You will not use our son as an excuse to run and hide"

Emma protested weakly, and Monica cringed at the brokenness in Emma's eyes, "I'm not hiding, Regina, I'm staying out of the way."

Henry seemed to grasp what's going on with Emma first and rose swiftly from his chair and went to his blonde mother, wrapping her in a bear hug, and she sobbed at the gesture, "Ma, you've got it all wrong."

when he noticed the apparent confusion on Regina's face he looked at Regina solemnly and explained with a maturity beyond his years, "She thinks we don't want her in our lives anymore. She thinks she's finally screwed up badly enough that we won't love her anymore"

Regina evaluated her son for a moment and seemed startled and disturbed by his insight. Emma's shoulders shook harder and everyone at the table seems to be debating how to deal with the emotional display they were clearly unused to from the usually stoic Emma Swan.

Monica swallowed, knowing exactly why Henry is the first to understand Emma's pain. Their pain was the same, the pain of a child who can never fully understand why they were given up in the first place. The pain of thinking that they will never truly deserve to be loved, no matter how much the people in their lives tell them otherwise. The pain of abandonment. Her heart clenched when she realized her own daughter knew that pain as well and it's a pain Monica that no matter what she did in the future, she may never be able to fully heal.

Regina hesitated for a moment longer before she finally wrapped her arms around mother and son, " Don't you get it, you *idiot*? We are mad at you *because* we love you, *because* we want you in our lives. We are grieving the fact that we *lost* you for twenty years. We just got you back, do you really think we'd ever give you up again willingly?"

Everyone seemed moved to action at that point, and Monica watched in amazement as Emma's unconventional family surrounded her and joined the growing group hug. Lexa glanced at Monica with expectation and it took Monica a moment to realize she was expected to join this family moment. When she caught the same expression on Regina's face, she finally moved from her chair and crossed the room to join the family. She stood awkwardly behind them for a moment before Raven yanked her unceremoniously into the hug.

Zelena suddenly entered the room at that moment and stared at everyone in obvious confusion, before sighing, " What did I miss now?"

Everyone laughed and started untangling themselves from the giant hug while Zelena watched with crossed arms and a furrowed brow, " I was told to be downstairs, packed and ready by four am. And what do I find? Everyone's crying and no one's ready."

Regina tossed her sister a glare without heat before addressing

Emma, “No matter how upset we get with each other, and no matter the reason, we don’t run, either of us, not ever again. Understood?”

Emma nodded, and wiped away what remained of her tears, “Okay.” She tried to put her brave mask back on and was failing miserably

Regina stared at her for a full moment longer until Zelena huffed in irritation, “ Seriously, what is it this time?”

They all heard another door from upstairs open and close and soon Abby padded into the room, Octavia and Lincoln on her heels. They all stared at the scene before them in confusion, Octavia arching an eyebrow, before she finally shook her head and asked, “food?”

Regina pointed to the kitchen, “ I made plates to go for Z and Abby They are on the counter. What's left on the stove is for you and Lincoln. Z and Abby, drink the vial on the counter with your name on them, drink it, then the orange juice.” The newcomers complied, Abby grunting her thanks.

Monica turned and glanced at Regina, “ Where are the others?”

Regina nodded, “ Mal, Lily and Ruby will meet us at the town line. They already took their vials a few hours ago”

Monica remembered her own vial and hesitated before opening the stopper and downing the contents. She nearly gagged and swiftly chugged her orange juice. She grimaced at the aftertaste and Raven chuckled, " We warned you"

Monica nodded gratefully stood and collected the empty plates around the table. Henry stood and followed her with empty glasses, “Don’t worry about cleaning them, I am going to need something to do once you guys leave”

She nodded and turned to face him, sensing he had followed her into the kitchen for another reason aside from something to do, “Are you going to be alright? There’s something on your mind, I can tell.” She asked gently.

He nodded, keeping his voice low, “Promise me something. Take care of my family?”

She agreed immediately, “Of course Henry, you know I will”

He swallowed, “ Thank you... for... what you said this morning. You were right. I was.. Lashing out. The truth is... I’m scared. Not because I think either of my moms would ever willingly leave me behind, but... I am always afraid they will go out to fight a battle one day, and one of them won’t come home.”

She sighed and opened her arms to the young man, “ Oh Henry, I can’t promise you that won’t ever happen. But I will promise you this. Your moms are fighters. And they love you dearly. There’s nothing either of them won’t do to make sure they both come home to you. And I promise you, I will do everything in my power to ensure that everyone makes it back safely.”

He nodded against her shoulder, “ Thanks Monica.”

Snow, David and Hook arrived to see them off and they left shortly after, with more emotional goodbyes amongst the family members who were staying behind as Henry and David loaded the cars with luggage. Monica swallowed her own guilt at the fact that they were dividing themselves up to help her.

She stated this softly to Regina and the brunette immediately stopped and glared at her, “ This is a choice we made, as a family. Don’t apologize for needing help putting your own family back together. Not now, not ever.” She glanced at Emma for a moment before looking at Monica with tears in her eyes, “ It’s okay to need help sometimes, Monica. You don’t have to bear the burden alone.”

Monica nodded in response and wasn’t surprised when Regina gave her another hug. She was growing used to the fact that this family was openly affectionate, and the fact that apparently, less than twenty four hours after meeting the rest of the family she was now considered a permanent fixture in that family. She simply accepted the affection she was sure was undeserved from Regina without argument and chokes back her own emotion when Regina whispers, “Thank you, for being there for her, and understanding her when I couldn’t”

Monica nodded, unable to speak around the lump in her own throat.

She gave Regina's arm a squeeze and headed to her own car in the driveway. Lexa, Clarke and Abby stood outside her car, patiently waiting for her. She nodded to them, "Alright, let's get this show on the road"

They all climbed in and made the short trip to the town line where Mal, Lily and Ruby were waiting with a very car that Lexa calmly informed her used to belong to none other than Cruella Deville. Monica simply nodded and accepted it as the truth it was without comment. She had already figured that much out from the license plate on the front and what she could see from the ghastly interior.

The three shapeshifters climbed into the overly flashy car and once again, they were on the road, no one commenting on the uncomfortable tingling sensation that passed through the car as they passed through the boundary. Monica took the lead in the caravan at that point, maintaining contact with Emma, Regina and Maleficent in their vehicles via a radio Henry had handed her. She stayed off the radio for the most part except to warn them whenever they reached a portion of road that looked impassable, which was often with the traffic. luckily, David had given them all police lights that attached to the top of the car, so they were able to go off road when necessary without too many vehicles attempting to follow them. still. it was chaotic, and there were sick people lying everywhere. after a while, Monica felt herself becoming numb to the cries for help. a look in the rearview mirror revealed that her passengers were stone faced and tense as well.

They pulled into Sanford Seacoast just in time to see the private jet with CATCO in bold font clearly printed on the side land on the tarmac. A few moments later, the plane came to a stop and the door opened. A tall thin blonde stepped off the plane, glancing at the group around her before asking, "Who is Guardian?"

Monica stepped forward, "That would be me"

The blonde removed her sunglasses and evaluated Monica for a moment before offering her hand, " It's nice to meet you Guardian, I assume this is the group who is going to help you save the world?"

Monica nodded, "Something like that"

The woman laughed, “Your confidence is truly inspiring.”

Regina stepped forward with a frown, and the blonde took immediate notice of her, “ Dark Swan I presume?”

Regina laughed, “ hardly, I'm Mayor Regina Mills, and you are?”

“Right! How rude of me! I always assume everyone knows who I am. I am Cat Grant, most of the world knows me as the Queen of all Media.”

Regina evaluated Cat with a smirk, and arched a brow, “ Most here know me as the Evil Queen, but titles tell us very little about a person, don't you think?”

Cat froze for a moment, clearly trying to figure out if Regina was serious but recovered quickly, “ Right. Well, we can become properly acquainted on the plane. There's a world that needs saving, and not much time to do it.”

Regina gave Cat Grant another long look and Monica nearly smirked at the obvious power display between the two women. Emma rolled her eyes and started to retrieve the luggage from the luggage. Cat Grant seemed to shake herself loose from Regina's stare and waved Emma off, “Let security get that.”

Emma nodded sharply and altered course, heading for the plane stiffly while the DEO agents swiftly collected the luggage.

Within a few moments, the plane was loaded and boarded, their cars were safely stored away in a private hanger and the plane was headed back down the runway, taking them to National City.

8. Cat Stages an Intervention

Notes for the Chapter:

another long chapter... the title is pretty self explanatory. lol. Cat Grant does what she does best. Hopefully I got her voice right... Anywho, it gets a bit angsty, but there's some light fluff too. It's admittedly a bit tough to balance this many characters in one chapter... so go easy. some are going to end up talking less, but I will eventually get to what Ruby, Mal and Lily think about being involved in this mission, promise.

Cat Grant was overwhelmed by the sheer amount of woman power aboard her private plane. There wasn't a single man in the group aside from the DEO agents assigned to protect them and the pilot, a fact she had noted the second she stepped onto the tarmac to greet Guardian's small army. And a small army it was. They had briefly introduced themselves once onboard and had told her what unique skills they brought to the mission.

At first, she had been admittedly hesitant to believe what she was hearing, but upon glancing at the brunette who had introduced herself as Monica Reyes, or as the DEO referred to her, Guardian, and realizing that the agent trusted this small group explicitly, she had relaxed and decided to listen to their tales.

None had surprised her more than the blonde sitting across from her now, Emma Swan, or Dark Swan. "Not that I don't agree that a well chosen name has considerable power, but you hardly look dark anything to me." She remarked, "Hence why I mistook Regina for Dark Swan."

Emma had nodded dismissively, preferring to stare out the window rather than make eye contact with anyone. Regina glanced at Emma and sighed before turning to Cat, "So I strike you as Dark?"

Cat laughed, "Hardly, but clearly, appearances can be misleading"

Regina pressed her, “But you thought I was Dark Swan”

Cat arched a brow at her, “You strike me as a strong woman who does not bow to the whims of others. You, like myself, wear authority like a shroud. Not to mention you seem to have a rather... what’s the word I am looking for.... Abrasive... personality when challenged, yet seem to be able to turn on the charm of a politician when the occasion calls for it.” Regina bristled and arched a perfectly manicured brow at Cat’s assessment of her.

Cat could tell this powerhouse of a woman seated across from her was clearly debating how to respond when Cat continued, “Does that make you dark? No. But you are a woman, and such strength is rarely tolerated out of us, let alone appreciated. My assumption that you were Dark Swan was based on my first impression of you. I apologize if that assumption offended you”

Regina relaxed marginally and nodded. She glanced again at the blonde next to her who had seemed only half present for the conversation since boarding.

Cat gestured to Emma, “Is she quite alright?”

Regina swallowed and Cat watched her debate how to answer that question. Emma turned away from the window and answered for her, “I’m fine. I just... have a lot on my mind at the moment.” She stood abruptly and gave Regina a wobbly smile, “I’m just going to go lie down in the back for a bit. Come find me if you need me”

Regina looked like she wanted to protest, but instead gave Emma a gentle smile, “Alright.” She hesitated, glanced at Cat then softly called after Emma as she headed down the aisle, “I love you Emma”

Emma paused for a moment, her rigid posture softened momentarily but the blonde didn’t turn around. “Love you too” She mumbled, before disappearing behind the curtain.

Regina’s expression betrayed her hurt and Cat turned away, giving the brunette a moment to recover, “I’m sorry, it’s been an emotional couple of days.” She stated softly.

Cat nodded, “ It’s quite all right. Guar... Agent Reyes gave me the brief rundown. It must be hard to finally reunite your family only to turn around and separate everyone again”

Regina nodded thoughtfully, “ It’s not easy. But it’s a judgement call we had to make. We couldn’t risk those without the additional protection of magic”

Cat straightened in her seat, “ Right, how does that work, exactly? Monica said magic hides the town from view, hence why it was too dangerous for us to fly directly there?”

“Exactly, even if the plane survived the collision with the barrier, there’s nowhere to land the plane safely. And there’s no telling how the plane’s systems would be affected. So we had to come to you.”

“How are you going to access your magic out here in the rest of the world? Monica said the town’s barrier contains your magic within it. And there isn’t a whole lot of magic in our world from what I’ve seen”

Regina sighed, “That’s also correct. It’s... a very limited resource here. But.. we discovered not long ago, that belief in magic is what creates magic in this world.”

Cat’s brow furrowed, “So in order to successfully wield magic outside of your town, you have to generate enough belief in it?”

“ Yes and no. Emma and I, along with our children possess innate magical talent. We carry our magic within us. But it’s a finite resource, and it will deplete much faster out here in the real world than it would otherwise. But... to help mitigate that...”

Regina withdrew a small glass vial from her pocket, “ Everyone is carrying one of these”

“What is that? Fairy dust?” Cat cringed at the words coming out of her own mouth. In what world was fairy dust even real?

Regina laughed, “ Even fairy dust won’t do much out here. No. this is the ashes of the crystal bolt my sister used to destroy Hades after he...” Regina’s voice choked off suddenly and tears filled her eyes.

Lexa Swan- Mills leaned across the aisle and took her mother's hand and finished for her, "After Hades killed Robin, my mom's husband"

Cat swallowed, "I'm sorry to hear that. You must miss him terribly"

This only made Regina's struggle to control her emotions harder and Lexa shook her head, " I've never met him. It's... complicated" she finished lamely. Cat simply nodded, afraid to say anything else lest she step on another emotional landmine. This family had clearly been through a great deal in a short period of time and their emotions were frayed as a result.

Lexa squeezed her mother's hand in comfort as she continued, "Anyway, while the bolt was destroyed, the ashes still retain some magical properties, namely the ability to make magic more accessible in this realm outside of Storybrooke. We are all carrying vials of it, so that we can all access it whenever we need to."

Regina stood rather abruptly and headed down the aisle, directing a hasty apology to Cat, "Would you excuse me for a moment?"

Cat nodded and watched the brunette head down the aisle Emma had fled down moments before, the same stiffness in her shoulders now as well. She turned back to Lexa and gave her a wry smile, " Perhaps I should stop talking, I appear to be running everyone off. "

Lexa shook her head and Raven sat down across from Cat and evaluated her for a long moment, before sighing, " It's not you. It's just the fact that our family has some healing to do, and haven't had a quiet moment to deal with anything."

Cat spoke with the Swan- Mills twins for a while, learning about their family's various abilities.

She watched Lexa interact with the blonde next to her and grinned when she realized how much Clarke reminded her of another young blonde she knew very well. She watched the two talk in hushed tones, before blurting out, "You two are an absolutely adorable couple"

Lexa blushed a deep scarlet and the blonde grinned at Cat, " Thank

you.”

“Remind me what your ability is Clarke?” Cat asked, and Clarke smirked, “ I could tell you, but it’s more fun to show you”

“ Oh dear, why does that make me immediately regret asking?”

Clarke’s mother, who had been talking to the fiery redhead turned around abruptly, “ Absolutely not Clarke, not in the air.”

The redhead waved off her concern, “Oh let her have her fun Abby. The only way to master her abilities is through practice”

“Practice is all well and good, Zelena, but I’d rather not risk her turning into something too large for the plane”

Cat’s eyes widened at the implication and she turned back to Clarke, “You can shapeshift? Into what exactly?”

“Anything I can think of. Any creature of this world or any other”

Cat stared at her, “Literally anything?”

Clarke nodded, “ As far as I’ve been told, yes. My mom is a shifter as well. And so are Mal and Lily, who shift into dragons” She pointed out the two blondes near the back of the room and to the thin brunette sitting across from them, “ and Ruby who shifts into a wolf”

Cat debated believing them for a moment then remembered that somehow, Kara had managed to have a twin standing in as Supergirl to cover for her identity. “ Can you shift into someone else, human I mean?”

Clarke didn’t answer. Instead she seemed to sense Cat’s curiosity and focused intensely for a moment, ignoring her mother’s rather unsettling growled warning and suddenly Clarke was no longer sitting in her seat. Instead, Cat was staring at the mirror image of herself. Cat’s jaw dropped open and she stared while the other her chuckled, “ Disconcerting, isn’t it?”

“ Quite” Cat agreed. She recovered from her shock and stared at her mirror image with interest, noting that Lexa seemed as fascinated by

the shift as she was. “ Oh dear, it would appear I need to schedule another appointment with my dermatologist, those laugh lines are absolutely atrocious”

Clarke as her burst out laughing at that and Cat covered her ears in horror, “ Tell me I do not sound like that when I laugh. Thank the gods I don’t laugh in public. Oh Rao, I can’t take it!” Her brow furrowed, *did she just use Kara’s line? How peculiar.* It appeared the young woman was influencing her more than she had imagined.

“ Clarke, stop tormenting the poor woman” Abby growled, ignoring the swat Zelena directed at her. After another moment, Clarke shifted back to herself and Zelena praised her, “ Well done Clarke”

Abby growled again and Zelena hastily added, “ but let’s hold off on anymore demonstrations until we are back on the ground. Your mother is about to have an aneurysm. And somehow, I doubt that she’s the one it will be fatal for if that occurs”

Cat relaxed, now that she wasn’t staring at a mirror image of herself and laughed lightly, “ I imagine there’s never a dull moment around your family”

Regina returned down the aisle and nodded her agreement, “ You imagine correctly.” She turned to Clarke, “Best save your shifts if you can Clarke, we don’t know how this realm affects your abilities yet.”

Clarke nodded and Raven switched to Emma’s vacated seat so her brunette mother could sit back down, “ My apologies for my earlier outburst... I only recently learned the truth about...” she seemed to hesitate over how to refer to her deceased husband before finishing softly, “ Robin.”

There was clearly more to it, but Cat wasn’t going to press Regina any further on the subject, “ No need to apologize. From what I can tell your family has been through a great deal recently. I can only hope that after this situation is resolved, your family will have the time needed to heal together.”

“ As do I” Regina stated wistfully, eyeing Cat curiously. Cat could tell from her response that Regina was clearly referring to the apparent

rift between her and Emma.

She let it go with a nod and glanced at her watch, “ I should let you get some rest. We will be landing in about two hours. I’m going to go speak to the pilot about landing arrangements”

Regina nodded and Cat left the Swan-Mills family alone, heading to the cockpit. She swiftly confirmed landing arrangements with the pilot and he handed her a box of ear pieces. “ We are going to be escorted in by Supergirl.”

“Of course we are” She retorts sarcastically, “ The DEO couldn’t give her something more important to do? She could be out there finding the people responsible for this, and they waste her talent on escorting us in? Why do we even need an escort?”

The DEO pilot ignores her outburst and continues, “ When we get about 10 minutes out from National City, have everyone put these on. We are going to need everyone ready to debark quickly. tell them not to worry about their belongings, the DEO will handle that. You all are going to have to hit the ground running, things are getting much worse out there...”

“ How much worse?”

He sighed, “ Flights everywhere are grounded. There are only two planes authorized to be in the air right now, ours, and Air Force One”

“ Air Force One?” her brow furrowed, “ Tell me that idiot isn’t coming back to National City”

He frowned, “ I wish I could. She insists that we need her help. That’s not all. Apparently, Cadmus has even offered their assistance.”

“At what cost?”

“ Lillian Luthor is offering her help in exchange for her daughter’s safe return”

“ We all know that’s not what she’s really after”

He shrugged, “Doesn’t really matter what her motives are right now.

She's right. We need the brain power of Cadmus."

She sighed and headed back through the cabin. She handed everyone the ear pieces and passed on the instructions. She glanced around and noticed with a frown that Emma was still not sitting with her family. Regina wasn't sleeping, she looked restless and uneasy.

Making a decision, Cat stepped in front of Regina, "Follow me."

Regina looked startled for a moment before glaring at Cat, "I wasn't aware that I take orders from you"

"I'm tired of watching you sulk. You are exhausted, and clearly uneasy. Everyone on board is watching you, and you are sitting in your seat pouting. Frankly it's ridiculous. You are of no use to anyone in your current state, and somehow I doubt Emma is faring any better. So woman the hell up, get your ass out of that chair, *your majesty*, and follow me."

"Why?"

"Because I said so. Stop arguing and start walking!" Cat barked and Regina's eyes narrowed dangerously but she stood and pushed past Cat pausing in the aisle, "Where exactly are we going?" she asked through gritted teeth.

Cat smirked, "You know where. I don't know what happened between you and Emma this morning and frankly I don't care. What I do care about is the fact that you two are clearly the leaders of this little band of heroes and everyone is currently being affected by your sour mood. So what I want you to do is march your ass down that aisle and go *fix* it."

Regina starts to argue, "I'm not the one who..."

Cat arches a brow at her, "Do I look like I care? One of you has to woman up first. And since both of you are acting like petulant two year olds, in need of a babysitter, I guess it's going to have to be me. Now turn around and go!"

Regina grumbled something hateful under her breath and headed down the aisle, turning to glare at Cat when she realized the older

blonde was following her, “Hell no, you are not coming with me. I need to talk to her alone”

“ Oh please, it’s abundantly clear you two won’t deal with whatever is bothering you unless someone is there to make sure you do. So yes. I am following you. Deal with it *Queenie* ”

Regina growled something dark and dangerous under her breath and Cat smirked at her, “ You don’t scare me.”

Regina whirled around, eyes blazing purple, “ If you had any sense, you would be terrified of me”

Cat laughed, “You ever been tossed off your own skyscraper?” Regina paused, puzzled by the question and the magic in her eyes fades and Cat arched a brow, “No? Well I have, and let me tell you, there’s absolutely nothing you could do to me that would scare me. You might have been called an evil queen but trust me dear, I’ve encountered enough villains to know when I am looking at one, and you... you look like a kicked puppy.”

Regina’s eyes narrowed again and Cat nudged her roughly, “ Time’s a wastin”

“She doesn’t want to talk to me”

“ Really? Because all I got from her was that she thinks you don’t want her around. She’s hiding, and you are letting her because it’s easier than dealing with it. Meanwhile your whole family is suffering the consequences.”

Regina’s eyes filled with guilt and she shook her head, “ I don’t know how to fix this...”

“Talking to her is as good a place to start as any, don’t you think? You two need to get back on the same wave length before we step of this plane, or you are useless to everyone. Now, I pride myself on being pretty decent at mediation and I am humbly offering my services”

Regina snorted, “ You don’t have a humble bone in your body”

Cat grinned, “ Neither do you. That’s why you let her walk away from you isn’t it? You’re used to her being the one to fix things. Well let me tell you something Queenie...”

“Stop calling me that” Regina growled and Cat smirked at her, “ Well stop acting like spoiled royalty used to getting her way, and I will happily consider using your real name,” She watched confusion and recognition cross Regina’s features and wondered what the woman was thinking.

She took advantage of the fact that she had knocked Regina off balance and gave Regina a serious look, “ Relationships take two. Now I know I just met you both, but right now, you are both scared. And it’s blinding you both to the fact that you draw your strength from one another. No matter what happened between you, you need to be united in this, otherwise this will destroy your family”

Regina nodded, her expression softening, “ You are right, I am being selfish.” She turned and headed behind the curtain and Cat followed smirking victoriously.

Regina found Emma sleeping in the very last seat, looking acutely uncomfortable. Regina sighed when she saw the blonde fidgeting uncomfortably, “She’s having nightmares again”

Cat nodded and sat across from the duo as Regina gently shook Emma awake. Emma startled, relaxing slightly when Regina took her hand. She looked lost and vulnerable for a moment before her mask slipped into place and she withdrew her hand from the brunette’s stiffly, “ Regina, everything okay?” Her voice was raw and distant.

Cat cleared her throat and addressed the blonde, “ No Miss Swan, everything’s not alright” Emma flinched at the formality and glared at Cat.

Regina’s lips twisted into a wry smile, “ She hates when I call her that”

Cat arched a brow and Emma turned to Regina, “ What’s going on?”

Cat smirked, relaxing back into her seat, “ I am conducting an

intervention”

Emma glared at her, “ We don’t need you interfering in our affairs *Ms. Grant* ”

“Except, clearly you do. You are hiding in the back of the plane, avoiding your family, and your family is clearly hurting as much as you are. Now listen, I don’t know what happened between you two, but you need to resolve it and get on the same wavelength before you step off this plane or you are going to put your family in far more danger as a result of your division.”

Emma arched an eyebrow, disbelief written clearly across her features, “ You think we can resolve twenty years of separation in what?” Emma glances at her phone, “ An hour?”

Cat stiffened, realizing she may have inadvertently bit off more than she could chew with this intervention and Emma laughed, “Didn’t think so”

She stood swiftly and started to leave but the brokenness in Regina’s voice made her pause, “Emma, please... can we... at least try?”

Emma glanced at the brunette and Cat held her breath until Emma sighed and sat back down, “ Regina....”

Regina shook her head, “Let me go first.” She glanced at Cat and Cat nodded her reassurance.

Regina took a deep breath and met Emma’s gaze “ I’m sorry Emma. I’ve been unfair to you”

The blonde stared at Regina as if she’d grown a third head, “No you haven’t. It’s my fault...”

Regina interrupted her firmly, “Let me finish.”

Emma nodded, fidgeting with her hands. Regina covered the blonde’s hands with her own, “ I’ve been unfair to you. I... judged you unfairly for leaving us for twenty years, and have been holding you responsible for everything that happened during that time. It’s not only unfair but entirely hypocritical of me to do so, and to withhold

forgiveness for your decision when your reasons for doing so were far more noble than my own when I cast the dark curse”

Emma stared at her confused, “What are you talking about?”

“ You’ve never blamed me, not once, for being the reason you were separated from your parents for twenty eight years, even though you have every right to do so. You forgave me for letting you be abandoned to the foster system. You haven’t held me responsible for you winding up in prison, or having to give Henry up... You’ve forgiven me for how I treated you that first year you were here. No matter how completely awful I’ve been to you every single time we fight, you forgive me. And I’ve always let you be the one to come after me and you always end up being the one doing everything you can to make it right, even when I’m the one who’s wrong. And yet, I blamed you... for leaving us behind to protect us. Worse than that, I’ve let you bear the brunt of the responsibility for making our relationship work”

“Regina...”

“No Emma... You were protecting us. You kept us safe and went out and tried to save our girls. You are not at fault for any decisions I made while you were gone, protection spell or no. It’s entirely unfair of me to hold that against you. I’ve already forgiven you, but I’ve been allowing you to continue punishing yourself over it and I’m sorry”

“ But you never would have been with Robin, never would have married him...”

Cat sat back, thoroughly confused as to what they were discussing, but happy that they were finally talking at least and the tension between them was finally fading.

“ Emma. listen to me.” The blonde hesitated but slowly let her eyes rise to meet the brunettes gaze, “ You are not responsible for my choices, anymore than I am responsible for yours. You forgave me for far worse. You are not at fault for my decision to marry Robin, and truthfully, while that marriage was far from ideal, I don’t regret a moment of it.”

“But Henry...”

“ Was being an ass, and will be dealt with. He takes after me in that regard, I’m afraid...” Emma starts to defend them both but Regina raises her hand, effectively silencing her, “ Trust me, my first marriage was miserable. While Robin and I were far from perfect, and he certainly couldn’t hold a candle to you, it was *not* a miserable, loveless marriage. So stop carrying a burden that isn’t yours to bear. Let me shoulder my share of the responsibility for my own choices. Please. ”

Emma started to cry and Regina cupped her cheek as Emma asked softly, “You were okay?”

“Yes Emma, I was okay. It was difficult, but Henry and I managed to be happy while you were gone. We missed you, even though we couldn’t figure out who it was we were missing, but we were safe, we were loved and cared for. And while life was far from perfect under that spell, we were never miserable.”

Regina lifted Emma’s chin until the blonde’s eyes met hers. “ I forgive you Emma. For all of it. Stop punishing yourself for things neither of us can change. And please, stop shutting me out and expecting me to turn my back on you.”

Emma searched Regina’s gaze while Cat looked on quietly.

Emma stared at their joined hands for a moment longer before meeting Regina’s gaze, “Okay.”

Regina managed a watery smile, “ Okay?”

Cat grinned at the hope in Regina’s voice and Emma smiled through her tears, “ Yeah, okay”

Regina sighed in relief, tugging Emma into her for a desperate kiss.

Cat carefully averted her gaze, and debated leaving now that her role was done. Regina pulled back after a moment and whispered, “ I’m so sorry my love, I’ve been so selfish, letting you carry this alone. No more, I promise”. Emma nodded and tugged Regina back into her for another kiss.

Cat smiled at the emotional display and stood quietly, having decided to leave them to work things out alone from here. Emma caught the blonde's arm and gave her a watery smile, "Thank you."

Cat smiled warmly at them, "Anytime. I've only know you for a short time but in that time it's become quite apparent that your family needs you united. You two are the glue that holds everyone out there together. So please don't neglect this. This kind of love comes once in a lifetime. Take it from me, you don't want to waste it on the past" She gestures between the two of them and they both nod, leaning into each other. She nods once more, immensely satisfied and gestures out the window. "That's national city on the horizon, it's time to put your ear pieces on."

They both nodded. Cat glanced out the window and grinned as Supergirl suddenly appeared by the plane and gave her a friendly wave. Regina glanced out the window and gasped, "Is that...?"

Cat nodded with a smirk, "Supergirl? Yes."

"How the hell is she flying?" Emma asked.

"You can ask her when we land. Cat addressed Supergirl, "Has the President landed yet?"

Supergirl nodded, and pressed the button on her own earpiece, her voice suddenly in Cat's ear, "yes Ms. Grant, she arrived 30 minutes ago."

"I can't believe she's risking her neck... again"

Supergirl shrugged, "She wants to help."

Supergirl met her gaze, "Let's get you guys on the ground safely too. Frankly, with everything going on, the military is entirely too trigger happy. I don't like you being exposed like this"

Cat gasped in horror at Supergirl's implication, "They've...."

Supergirl nodded, anger in her eyes, "It would appear our military is not recognizing the orders of the commander in chief"

“ That means someone else is calling the shots on this”

Supergirl sighs, “We can discuss it once I get you on the ground safely”

Cat nods, “ Of course Supergirl”

The captain came on the intercom, “ We are now approaching National City. If you are not already, please sit in the seat nearest you and fasten your seatbelts. Earpieces should be worn at this time. Please follow our instructions explicitly. We are coming in for a landing. Please do not be alarmed if the plane makes any sudden maneuvers.”

Cat sighs and sits back down across from Regina and Emma and shakes her head when they start to move towards the aisle, “Your family is fine, Agent Reyes is with them. If he says sit and fasten seatbelts, we had better listen to him”

They sit back down and fasten their seatbelts, and Regina holds Emma’s arm tightly, her fingers going white.

“ Regina, breathe” Emma whispers and Regina glances at her, the fear evident in her eyes.

Cat reaches across and squeezes Regina’s hand reassuringly, “ It’s going to be fine dear. He’s gotten me out of several hairy situations before, I trust him with my life”

Regina nods stiffly and Cat leans back into her seat, “ Besides, we have Supergirl right beside us. Trust me, no one is better at catching planes than her”

Regina relaxes marginally but doesn’t release her death grip on Emma. They are silent as they come in for a landing, National City rising up around them, the extent of the mayhem below quickly becoming apparent as the ground rises swiftly to meet them. Everyone’s expressions are growing more Cat sighs with relief the second the wheels touch the runway and Emma grunts in pain as Regina’s grip tightens on her arm, and Cat grins, “ It’s fine Regina, you can let go now. That was the wheels, touching down.”

Regina doesn't loosen her grip until the plane comes to a complete stop though and then it suddenly occurs to her that she's hurting Emma. she turns to the blonde in horror, " I'm sorry" she examines the blonde's arm and calls on her magic as Cat watches in fascination.

Emma shakes her head and laughs it off, "I'm fine Regina, no need to use magic"

Regina ignores her and waves her glowing hand over the blonde's arm, her expression furrowed in concern. The redness faded quickly, and her handprint disappeared from Emma's arm.

Emma grinned at the shock on Cat's face.

Cat recovered quickly and stood, " Let's go. Don't worry about your luggage, the DEO is handling it"

The two women follow her down the aisle and they rejoin the rest of the group before heading for the door.

Cat descends first and is immediately greeted with a hug from Supergirl. Cat smiles warmly at the woman and returns her embrace, " I was so worried when I found out they sent you. I'm glad you are back safe Ms. Grant"

Supergirl pulls back and examines Cat from head to toe her brow furrowed in worry, " You haven't had any symptoms have you?"

Cat shakes her head, "None. I'm fine Supergirl. No need to worry about me"

Supergirl breathes a sigh of relief but frowns, " You'll tell me if you do, right?"

Cat gave her another hug, "You will be the first to know. Now, let's get these lovely ladies to the DEO. We have a planet to save"

9. Finding Lena

Notes for the Chapter:

in a sudden burst of inspiration, I've written multiple chapters today. so... Enjoy!

Kara breathed a sigh of relief the second the plane came to a full stop on the runway. She hated the fact that so many of her friends and loved ones were exposed to danger. She landed by the plane and waited impatiently as the door slowly opened. She couldn't help the relieved grin that broke out when Cat Grant was the first to descend the stairs. Kara yanked the older woman into a fierce hug the moment she was close enough, expressing her relief. Cat simply chuckled and returned her hug, dismissing her concerns lightly, "Now, let's get these lovely ladies to the DEO, we have a planet to save"

Kara nodded seriously and directed her attention to the group descending the stairs. She left Cat's side and approached the brunette woman from the file J'onn had given her, "Guardian?"

The woman gave her a tired smile, "Call me Monica, and guessing from your outfit, you must be Supergirl"

Kara nodded, and Monica extended her hand, "I assume you know who I am?"

"Lena's birth mom" Kara breathed and Monica nodded, "J'onn told me you've befriended her, that you watch out for her. I can't thank you enough"

Kara shook her head, "Don't thank me yet. I didn't protect her yesterday, she left my apartment upset and walked right into a trap because of me..."

Monica shook her head, "None of this is your fault. You can't blame yourself Kara"

Kara froze at the use of her real name, glancing over her shoulder at

Cat who waved away her concern with a smirk, “ Oh please, I’ve known it was you since the first time I saw you in that outfit”

“ You’ve known for that long?” Kara squeaked, hating that her voice sounded so high, “ but I thought...”

“That your shape-shifting friend managed to convince me? Hardly. The only thing that little stunt did was convince me how committed you were to maintaining your secret. I decided to let it go for your sake at that point”

Kara shook her head, “ I was...”

“ Trying to protect me by keeping me in the dark. I know. That’s why I let it go. But anyone who spends any amount of time with you, knows Kara, unless they are a complete moron. Those ridiculous glasses don’t fool any of us.”

Kara sighed and turned her attention back to the brunette in front of her, “ We are doing everything we can to find Lena. They found the car used to take her disposed of in an alley. They’ve shut down a ten block radius, since they couldn’t have gotten very far on foot.

“ And if they switched vehicles?”

“ My sister is on-site with a forensics team now. If they find any evidence to suggest that they swapped vehicles, she will find it.”

Monica nodded thoughtfully, and Kara caught her gaze, “ I swear to you, we will find her and get her back. I won’t stop until we do”

Monica gave her a wry smile, “ I know Kara. Thank you.”

“I care about her too...” Kara hesitates and whispers, “A great deal more than she knows”

Monica stepped forward and surprised Kara with a strong, motherly hug, “ I know. I’ve kept tabs on her over the years. I am so grateful she has someone in her life who cares for her as much as you do.”

Kara senses that Monica knows exactly how much Kara cares and it scares her that she is so transparent in her feelings. Everyone seems

to know what she is thinking or feeling long before she recognizes it herself. She wants to kick herself for not realizing the truth in time.

She must have said that outloud because Lena's mother tightens her hold and whispers, " Time hasn't run out yet. Don't give up yet Kara. Lena is strong, and intuitive. Knowing her, she's likely figuring out a way out of this right now"

Kara laughed, " You are probably right. Last week I fought my way through the Daxomite ship to save her and Mon- El only to realize she was already well on her way to saving herself."

Monica released her from the hug and nodded to the group behind her, " Let's get out of the open. I need to brief DEO's finest on what I know of the virus. Any luck finding Dana Scully?"

Kara swallowed, " We... um" she bit her lip, not sure how to share the bad news.

Monica's face fell, " They have her?"

" We don't know for sure. She was spotted on the bridge out of D.C. She was with Agent Mulder when a ship picked them up. We've had ships showing up on our scanners, but their signals are scrambled so we can't get a lock on their exact location. But our analyst said the ship that picked her and Mulder up last night was tracked here before it's signal disappeared altogether, so..."

" They have her and Mulder." Monica guesses and Kara nods, "The closest lock we could get on the ship's location is within that same ten block radius, so..."

Monica sighs, "Well that's... a start"

They reached the armored vehicles and everyone climbed inside. Kara nodded sharply, see you there"

"You aren't riding with us?" Emma Swan asked.

"Someone's gotta find a way through the traffic for you" Kara points out and Emma nods shortly, " Be safe Supergirl"

She nods, “ Always” and closes the door of the van before taking off for the sky.

She directs them around the worst of the traffic, occasionally swooping down to move a car out of their way before returning to her higher vantage point. They reach the DEO without incident and Kara follows them into the garage. She lands gently and nods to J’onn as he greets the newcomers. She watches the group with interest, and when she scanned them with her X-ray vision, her eyebrows lifted in surprise. Several in the group had flexible bone structures, and while they weren’t the same as J’onn’s, they were close enough that she was able to determine that they were shifters. She glanced at Monica who winked at her.

She was starting to understand why Monica had been so adamant about the group of women before her coming along to help. She approached them carefully and introduced herself, “ Kara Zor El. and you are?”

“Clarke Griffin. This is my mother Abby, and my girlfriend Lexa”

Kara smiled at the two women on either side of the blonde and dipped her head respectfully. “You are a shifter, are you not?” Kara asked the younger blonde.

“ Yes, how did you guess?”

Kara points to her eyes, “ Xray vision. Your... bone structure resembles that of a shifter”

Clarke blushed, “ You have xray vision?”

Kara realized the implication she had inadvertently made and blushed furiously, “ It doesn’t work... quite like that... but... yes”

Clarke’s mother arched an eyebrow, “ So our bone structure gives us away? What else can you see?” Kara glanced at the woman and Abby gave a shy grin, “ I’m a doctor and a scientist, and I’ve never met anyone from another planet, so I’m naturally curious”

Kara grinned and relaxed, “ Naturally”

She turned and glanced at the rest of the group speaking with J'onn, and pointed to the tall thin blonde, " She and her daughter are also shifters, as is the brunette with the red streak in her hair. The rest of the group, aside from Monica, including you..."

She directs this to Lexa, "...have some strange... energy that seems to flow through you. I presume it's the magic Monica referred to?"

Lexa nodded, her eyebrow arching and Kara grinned, " You must be Emma Swan's daughter.. You look a lot like her"

" You know Em... my mom?" Lexa caught herself and Kara gave her an odd look. " Just what the DEO told me, although her file seems outdated. She doesn't look like her pictures"

Lexa nodded, "She's... changed"

Kara sensed there was a great deal more to it but let it go for now, " You want to come see where you will be staying? You must be exhausted"

Lexa gave a short nod and Kara evaluated her for another long moment. The brunette carried herself with authority and it fascinated Kara. Clarke arched an eyebrow at her when she realized Kara was studying her girlfriend and Kara gave her an apologetic smile before turning to the brunette, " Lexa, you remind me a lot of Lena. What do you do for a living?"

Lexa hesitated, glancing at Clarke for help and Clarke chuckled, " It's complicated... but we are both from another realm, and we are the respective leaders of our people"

Kara nods, " That explains it. You carry the same confidence Lena does. I've always admired that in her. She's a strong leader" The two women must have caught something in her tone because they glance at each other and grin before Clarke asks lightly, " What else do you admire about her?"

Kara catches the teasing note in Clarke's tone and blushes deep scarlet, " Am I truly that obvious?"

Clarke nodded, her expression softening, " It's okay to love her Kara"

Lexa nodded and eyed Kara closely, “You haven’t told her yet have you?”

Kara shook her head, tears filling her eyes, and Lexa nods firmly, “You will get your chance. If she’s as like me as you say she is, she’s going to be just fine”

“Rao, I hope so”

Kara showed them to their rooms and left them to rest, “Join us downstairs when you are ready”

She headed to the main floor and spotted her sister and Maggie immediately. Alex greeted her with a strong hug, “We figured out which vehicle they switched too, and we have Winn trying to pin it down now. We’ve got four strike teams checking every warehouse in the area now. We are close, I can feel it”

Maggie gave Kara a reassuring smile, “We are gonna find her Little Danvers. We are getting close, and there’s nowhere for them to run.” Kara nodded sharply, “Any word on my cousin?”

“He has his hands full in Metropolis. He can’t come help, but he sends his love. He’s working with the hospitals to figure out how to combat the virus. It seems alien DNA, regardless of what Alien species it comes from seems to help. The problem is finding aliens willing to help, with all the persecution that’s been going on lately.”

Kara nodded, “So my DNA will help?”

“Yes, but it takes time to replicate it, and frankly, we need a better way to disperse it.”

“What about radiation?” Emma had appeared rather suddenly, startling several agents.

Alex turned and grinned, “Dark Swan! Glad you could make it.” She gave Emma a strong hug, “Hey Danvers, good to see you too. Call me Emma, I’m not the Dark One anymore”

“Clearly” Alex teased and Emma just nodded, “I spent a lot of time in a realm with a ton of nuclear and solar radiation. The old diseases-

meaning the ones known to us... vanished when the earth was exposed to the radiation. None of them were able to mutate fast enough to counter the effects of the radiation, so they all died out. If we could do that here..."

"You want to irradiate the planet?"

Emma nodded and motioned behind her, "Temporarily. This is Doctor Griffin, she's from that realm. So is my daughter Raven. Raven is a brilliant engineer. She should be able to help you come up with a device to distribute the correct amount of radiation and then effectively counter it."

J'onn stared at Emma like she was nuts and Kara agreed, "You are joking"

"Do you have a better plan J'onn? At the rate people are getting sick and dying, there's no way you will be able to get alien DNA into everyone in time. Not to mention, if you do that, the human race as we know it will effectively cease to exist. This is the best option to eliminate the viruses making everyone sick, and preserve the human race"

"By exposing them to toxic levels of radiation"

"Just toxic enough to kill the viruses. It doesn't have to be fatal"

"It will be for some, you realize that right?"

"The people with the weakest immune systems won't make it, you are right about that. But we don't have a choice, unless you have some grand plan you haven't shared yet?"

"How are we going to mass produce radiation and distribute it globally?"

"I can help with that"

Kara watched Emma stiffen at the familiar voice and arched a brow in surprise as Emma snarled, "Your help is neither wanted nor needed Lillian"

The brunette who looked like an older version of Raven appeared beside Emma in a purple cloud and took the blonde's hand. Emma relaxed marginally as Lillian laughed, " You've changed Swan. you look... weak"

Regina snarled and a ball of fire appeared in her hands, " Let me guess, Lillian Luthor"

" In the flesh, and you are?"

"Your worst nightmare" the brunette sneered. Kara was grateful the brunette was on her side. If she was Lillian, she would have been nervous with the obvious threat she posed.

The rest of the family appeared, coming down the stairs and Lillian stiffened when she spotted Monica, " What are *you* doing here?"

Monica eyes darkened with rage, "I could ask you the same thing."

Emma restrained Monica from approaching Lillian, " Monica, don't let this bitch get in your head, she's hardly worth the effort. Focus on why we are here"

Monica nodded and turned away from Lillian in disgust. Kara stepped in front of the arrogant woman and pointed to the stairs, " The exit's that way. Since you managed to find your way in here, I trust you can find your way out. If not, I'd be more than happy to escort you"

The threat was clearly implied and for a moment, the smugness disappeared from Lillian's features before it returned full force, " Come now Kara, we've worked together to save Lena before, why must we always play this game" Kara saw her sister gesturing for her to distract Lillian and Kara complied with glee.

Kara stepped into the woman's face, snarling, " Saving Lena's life is not a game, clearly, that's not something you understand since she's never been more than a pawn to you. Now. I won't warn you again, remove yourself from the premises, or I will remove you, personally, and trust me, If I am forced to make the effort, I will ensure your removal is permanent. Do I make myself clear?"

Alex stepped behind Lillian and Emma smirked, " Change of plans.

She's not going anywhere”

Lillian tried to struggle, only to find herself magically restrained by both Emma and Regina, while Alex easily slapped cuffs on her. She nods to another agent, “Escort Ms. Luthor to her holding cell”

“ You can't hold me here. You have nothing to charge me with!”

Alex arched a brow, smirking, “Oh really? We have enough charges against you to lock you away for life and toss away the key. Besides, you're being held under the Patriot Act as an active terrorist, therefore you have no rights”

“ Terrorist? The DEO are the terrorists. I've done nothing but try to protect this world from the alien threat!”

Alex sighed, shooting a look at the guards, “Get her out of here. We have work to do”

“ With pleasure Agent Danvers” the men grabbed Lillian roughly and dragged her out of the room.

Maggie was frowning thoughtfully, and Kara poked her gently, “ What's wrong Maggie?”

“Well, she might have had a point. Not about needing Cadmus, or even Lillian herself. We know much of the technology Cadmus has, originally came from Lena. If we find... “ She glances at Kara and immediately corrects herself, “When we find her, she will likely have the tech we need.”

“ What tech?”

“ Remember the rocket launcher?”

Kara nods, shuddering at the memory of the Medusa Virus Lillian had tried to launch to wipe out alien life in National City, “What about it?”

“Well, Lena has already demonstrated the ability to modify her tech for different purposes. Last I heard L- Corp was working on a device that could be launched into atmosphere and could release particles to

help repair the ozone layer.”

Kara grinned, “ Right, she told me about it nearly a month ago, L-Corp was scheduled to test it when Rhea approached her with her little plot”

Maggie nodded, “The test was successful. She planned an ozone test for a few weeks from now, but if she could modify the tech...”

Raven’s eyes widened, “ We could use it to blast a larger hole in the ozone layer temporarily to expose the entire planet to more solar radiation, then launch a second series of rockets to repair it”

Kara swallowed, “That’s incredibly risky...”

“But it could work, right?”

J’onn glanced at his scientists and they shrugged. Winn nodded, “Theoretically, it could work. It will make the weather go nuts for a while, and cause other environmental disturbances, but yeah, that amount of radiation will make it next to impossible for organisms like bacteria and viruses to survive. We would have to get it exact though. We have to calculate the exact size the hole in the ozone layer would have to be and for how long to successfully kill all the viruses and bacteria currently making people sick without causing more harm than absolutely necessary. The hospitals will have to deal with an influx of radiation poisoning, but if we do it right, it will be fairly mild, and far less lethal than what’s currently killing them. But we definitely need Lena for that type of data.”

“ What about me? I’m an excellent hacker” Raven asked.

“ If you think you can get through L-corps firewalls, be my guest. Lena built them herself, and I’ve been trying for months.”

Raven smirked, “Give me a computer”

Winn grinned, “Yeah, okay... “ he whirled around and shoved a DEO tech in his rolling chair out of the way, “Sit here”

The agent glared at him and he shrugged, “The woman said she needed space to work. Go find something useful to do”

An alarm sounded from Winn's computer and he stared at the screen in surprise, " Uh... guys. I think I know where Lena is"

Kara darted over, Monica hot on her heels, "What? Where?"

"Damn that girl really is a genius. She created a homing beacon and activated it. It's attached to a security camera."

Kara nearly shoved him out of the way. Lena was standing in front of a camera in a dark cell. She could make out writing on the wall behind Lena. The woman had managed to scrape a call for help into the wall and was wildly gesturing to it.

"IN WAREHOUSE BY DOCKS. HERE WITH TWO FBI AGENTS"was roughly scrawled into the wall. Beneath that line was " call themselves Mulder and Scully. Ok for now, send help"

Winn was typing furiously and grined in triumph, " Ha, hacked into the sound system, and managed to isolate the speaker in that cell. He glanced at Kara and Monica, "She should be able to hear you guys now, give us another minute, and we can find a location on that camera's exact location"

He stepped away from the mike and Kara grabbed it, " Lena, can you hear me?"

The brunette jumped back in shock then grinned widely, "Yeah, I can hear you Kara."

"Thank Rao. do you know which warehouse you are in?"

Lena shook her head, "Sorry, I haven't been anywhere near the windows in this place. But the air is salty, and it reeks of fish"

Kara felt all her emotion welling up in her voice, "Kara, I don't have much time. I need you to know, I am not mad at you. I understand now..."

'Don't you dare give up Lena, you hear me? We are coming for you. They are putting a strike team together now."

Lena nodded, her eyes filling with tears on the screen. " Scully told

me that my mom... is my mom...?"

Lena choked up and Kara handed Monica the mike, " I'm here sweetheart. I need you to hang on. I'm on my way"

Lena dropped to her knees, sobbing. " Mom, promise me, send the team, but please don't come here. He's..."

" He's not laying a finger on your head Lena, you hear me? We are coming to get you. Emma's here too. I need you to hang on you hear me? Hang on sweetie" Monica was crying, her finger reaching for Lena through the screen.

Lena seemed to sense it and reached for the screen, tears streaming down her cheeks, " I love you mom and I understand why now... No matter what happens, I need you to know that.." Monica covered her mouth to hide the sound of her sobbing and Regina placed a comforting hand on her shoulder.

Lena seems to hesitate, "Kara...."

Monica lets Kara lean into her to reach the mike, " Lena, don't you dare say goodbye."

Lena hesitates at the emotion in her friend's voice and Emma steps up to the sobbing duo. She gently grasps the mike, " Lena, It's Emma Swan. I know you are scared, and worried, but I need you to buy time. You remember the plan we discussed if you ever got into trouble?"

Lena nodded, a small hopeful smile tugging at the corners of her mouth, "Yeah, I remember."

Winn and Raven whooped and high fived before Raven announced to the group, " Got a lock on her location, she's in the old fishing market by the pier"

Alex nodded firmly turning to her team, "Get everyone ready to go, Now"

Emma spoke calmly into the mike, " You hear that Lena? We are on our way, do whatever you gotta do to buy us time. Hang in there"

Lena nodded solemnly. "You got it Emma. Keep mom and Kara out of here. Don't let them come."

Emma sighed and eyed Monica who shook her head firmly, her eyes betrayed her fury. Emma cleared her throat, "Buy time"

Lena shook her head, desperation seeping into her voice, "Emma I'm serious..."

"So am I."

Lena frowned at a sound down the hall, "Shit, they're coming." She hurried and disconnected the camera and whispered, "I love you" just before the screen and sound went static.

Kara's heart seized at Lena's last words, and she was terrified at how much the words sounded like goodbye. She whirled around and saw the same fear in Monica's eyes. The brunette nodded, "Let's go"

Kara was halfway to the window when Emma grabbed her arm, "Wait, you are not going in there without backup, we need a plan"

"How are we getting through traffic?" Alex asked while grabbing her sister's free arm to prevent her from leaving.

Maleficent stepped forward, "This is the point where the shapeshifters finally can join the fun"

Kara glanced at them, "How?"

"My daughter and I are dragons. Once we shift, Clarke will have a point of reference to shift into as well. Those who can't fly, ride"

Kara nearly grinned, "Dragon's? Really? won't that draw attention to our arrival?"

Mal's daughter smirked, "Of course, why else would we be here?"

Lily grinned, "we have magic, we can shield our approach. they won't see us coming, trust me"

Kara nodded, "Let's go get her then"

Emma nodded, “ Kara leads, carrying Alex. You two are point. Which means... Kara, don't do anything stupid. You hear me? Listen to your sister.”

Kara frowns at the fact that Emma seemed to have her pegged already. “Shifters right behind with magic users. DEO Agents watch our six and provide cover fire.”

J'onn stepped up, “I can carry one too. Monica, you want to fly with me?”

Monica nodded tears in her eyes.

Emma gave her a hard look then gave the same look to Kara, “ I know you are scared, but Lena is right. I shouldn't be letting you come at all. CSM is dangerous, and he has absolutely nothing to lose. He's cold and calculating. The only way to get in there and get the people you care about out alive, is to be better at his games than him. But I know enough about the both of you that there's no way in hell you will let me leave you here. So you stick with the plan. We go in careful and quiet. We don't do anything stupid. He's expecting you, and he plans to use your love for Lena, and Scully against you. Don't let him. Stay calm, stay alert and above all, don't risk your own neck. Got it?”

They both nod and Emma nods, “ Alright, let's go get the girl”

Kara exchanges a look with Alex who gives her a small smile. Emma has n idea, but she just mirrored Kara's words to Alex when she confessed her attraction to Maggie. from the way Alex hugged her sister before allowing herself to be carried high above the city, Alex remembered it well. Kara muttered under her breath, "We're on our way Lena... Hang on just a little longer"

10. Diversionary Tactics

Notes for the Chapter:

This chapter is an emotional roller-coaster... So... yeah. It took quite a bit of work, and I won't tackle the next chapter til tomorrow... I wrote a lot this week, more than I planned. lol. Hopefully this chapter succeeds in what I want it to do. I know this story is a bit more angsty than *Brave Enough* was, but it will all resolve itself before the end of our journey, so sit back and enjoy the ride. As always, I tried to throw in little bits of fluff to lighten the mood.

“ If you ever find yourself in a life or death situation, press here”

Emma gently pressed on the fading ink on the back of Lena’s neck.

“ What’s it do?” the little girl asked.

Emma knelt in front of her, “ It’s a spell, and it gives you magic. But only for a short time Lena, so you can’t hit it whenever you want.”

“ Only when the bad people come for me”

“ You’ve got it. And it will tell me where you are, so I can find you, no matter where I am”

Little Lena nodded seriously, “ What can I do, with magic?”

“ If you have to use it, you are going to make as big a mess as possible. Create a distraction, until I get there. Like I said, it’s limited, so create a distraction, then only use it if the bad guys get too close. Understand?”

Lena nodded, “ Yes Ms. Emma. I understand”

“Good. be careful kiddo.” Emma affectionately ruffled the little girl’s hair before she started to walk away.

Lena called after the white haired woman, “Emma?”

“Yes Lena?”

“Tell mommy I’m sorry. ”

Emma’s eyes teared up and she knelt once more, “Honey, you didn’t do anything wrong. She loves you.”

“ Then why’d she send me away?”

The little girl was brokenhearted and Emma drew her close to her chest, “ Because it was the only way to keep you safe. Bad people want to hurt your mommy. And they know the only way to hurt her, is to hurt you. So she sent you away to keep you safe until she puts the bad people in jail. Never think you did something wrong Lena. The bad people did. She sent you with me because she loves you. That’s why she sent me to check on you. You know that right?”

“ Then why’d she give me to the Luthors? Aren’t they bad people?”

Lena started crying and Emma’s heart broke, “ Because sometimes, mommies have to give their little girls away in order to give them their best chance. It doesn’t mean that they don’t love their little girls anymore, it means the opposite, they loved them so much, and it was the only way to keep them safe. And yes, sweetie, the Luthors are bad people, but they love you, so that means they will help keep you safe”

The bright little girl saw the tears in Emma’s eyes and the little girl caught on quickly, “ Did you give your little girls away?”

Emma teared up, “ Yes sweetheart, I did. But I am doing everything I can to keep them safe until I bring them home. And I promise you, I will do the same for you one day”

“ Do what?”

“One day, I’m going to bring you home to your mommy. But I need your help to make that happen”

“ You need me to stay safe”

“Exactly, can you do that for me Lena?”

Lena nodded, her expression serious, “ Yes Ms. Emma. I will stay safe. Tell mommy I love her”

“ I promise, I will tell her. And she loves you, don’t you ever forget who you really are Lena”

“ I won’t, I promise”

The memory was so strong and as it faded the footsteps coming down the hall drew closer. She found herself pressing her hand against the mark that the handful of people who had caught glimpse of it mistook for a birthmark, drawing comfort from it. Her brief conversation with her mother, Kara and Emma replayed in her head. *It’s time.* The thought both terrified and exhilarated her. Her real mother was in National City. Emma was making good on her promise. She was on her way to rescue Lena from the most evil man alive and return her birth mother’s arms. Her nerves were frayed and her hands trembled. She took a deep calming breath and stood stiff and tall, her hand still resting firmly above the nearly invisible mark that rested just beneath her hairline. It had been a nervous tick for years, reaching for the one spot that guaranteed her power, however temporarily. She had had several occasions to use it in the past, but never had, always sensing the time had not come yet, that darker days were still approaching. Now they were here. Emma had confirmed it. These were the people her birth mother had feared so much that she had sent her only daughter away to live with strangers, in order to save her.

The door clanged open and cigarette man smirked when he spotted the wall she didn’t bother to try and hide, “ Just who do you think is going to see that message dear? My firewall is impossible to breach”

She didn’t answer him. She instead she intentionally rubbed her thumb against the mark, digging her thumb into the skin there. For a second nothing happened. She nearly panicked but then felt the exhilarating rush of pure heat rush through her veins and for the first time since this began yesterday morning, Lena feels powerful. She adopts the cocky smirk that is her shield and arches a brow, “ Right, impenetrable...unless, of course, someone hacks their way through it

from the inside”

His brows arched in amusement, “Really? I knew you were smart, but perhaps I underestimated you”

“He’s toying with you Lena.” Scully’s voice called calmly from the adjacent cell.

He grinned, “ Ever the perceptive one Dana, as usual”

He withdraws a tape recorder from his pocket and plays the conversation she just had with her loved ones. She nodded, hiding her fear behind a mask of indifference, “It was a risk I was willing to take. They aren’t coming. They aren’t that stupid”

He laughed. “You don’t know Monica Reyes like I do dear. She’s already on her way here. But it won’t matter.” He reaches for her and she reacts instinctively, shoving him through the air and watches him slam into the concrete wall behind him and lie still. She stares at her hands in surprise and nearly laughs. “Now that’s power” she whispers.

“Lena, there’s not much time” Dana reminds her through the small vent between their cells and Lena nods even though she knows Dana can’t see her. She leaves her cell and flicks her wrist, and the cell door adjacent to hers wrenches off of its hinges with a groan, slamming into the wall, shattering concrete and twisting the metal door into an unrecognizable heap of metal. Dana stares at her with a hint of fear but Lena sighs, “Come on, there isn’t time. They are on their way here, and I have no doubt he’s rigged the whole place”

Dana hesitated then whispered, “ Kill him.”

Lena looked at her in surprise, stammering, “ I... can’t”

“Lena, that man is the epitome of evil. He’s taken countless lives, manipulated thousands more. He can’t live”

“He won’t” a familiar voice stated calmly behind her. Lena whips around and sees Emma looking the same as she had a few years ago when she last checked in standing next to a massive lioness.

“Emma?”

Emma barely glances at the massive beast, “Finish him”

The cat acknowledges the order with a tilt of her massive head and launches herself at the unconscious man as Emma swiftly pushes Lena and Scully down the hall, “Don’t turn around, no matter what you hear. Go”

Mulder finally managed to leave his cell and paused, staring in horror at the carnage until Scully yelled at him, “Mulder, there’s not time. Let’s go”

Lena tried to free herself from the death grip Emma has on her, “Emma, where’s...?”

“No time, let’s go”

Lena sensed something was off. She couldn’t pinpoint why, but Emma wasn’t having the calming effect she remembered when she was a child. Instead, the spell Emma placed inside of her wanted to lash out at Emma.

Then she heard Emma calling her name, from the other side of the warehouse, behind her.

Lashing out instinctively, she clamped down on the Emma dragging her away from the real Emma with her temporary magic and watched in horror as the face she thought she knew morphed into that of a man with a scarred face.

Scully turned and yelled at Mulder, “Mulder, the pen!” He tossed it through the air and Dana caught it then promptly tossed it to Lena, “stab him in the back of the neck, and run like hell”

She continues fighting the man with her magic, but it’s waning already and he begins to gain the upper hand. “Lena, the pen! It’s the only way to kill him!”

Her martial arts training kicks in and she slips from his grasp, managing to duck under her arm, slipping behind him and slammed the pen into his neck. She watched in horror as green liquid started pouring from the wound, “Lena, run now! It’s toxic” her eyes were already feeling the sting of the toxic gas being released and she

stumbled towards Scully, falling into the shorter woman's waiting arms, letting out a blood curling scream of pain as her vision became blurry.

She heard Emma calling her name again, louder this time, along with Kara. Strong arms scoop her up and she feels herself being carried by a person she guesses has to be Mulder given the day old aftershave that is still somehow strong enough that it made her want to sneeze. A low roar sounded behind her and the person carrying her moved faster. They nearly dropped her a moment later when another low growl sounded, from the opposite direction this time. "Shit.. More of them?" Mulder cursed.

Fighting through the pain, she managed to get an eye open in time to see three large animals approaching rapidly, moving as one cohesive unit. When they are close enough, they launch themselves directly over her head as Mulder ducked, dropping her from his arms so he could cover her body with his own, shielding her from what he likely assumed would be a death blow. She saw just enough to determine that two looked like massive cats, and the third was a snarling wolf. They were tearing into the massive cat behind them now, snarls and cries of pain sounding far too close for comfort. She heard a louder unhuman scream accompanied by blistering heat coming from somewhere above her as sounds of fighting surrounded them. Suddenly Emma was over her, a familiar presence beside her. Lena's vision faded to black as her mother scooped her into her arms, "I'm right here Lena."

"I've got her" Kara's voice sounded so far away but Lena tried to lean into it anyway. She felt familiar arms come around her and she leaned her head against Kara's chest and let the darkness take her as Kara whispered against Lena's ear, "You're safe now" as cool air whistled past them leaving the sounds of fighting far behind.

Her awareness waxed and waned, though she couldn't drag herself free of the thick, cloying darkness that held her hostage. She sensed people coming and going, and was constantly aware that at least one

hand was always tangled with one of hers at all times. She knew Kara was there beside her, though she cried far more than she spoke. She could sense the calm, steady presence of her white haired childhood hero, Emma Swan, who talked to her constantly when she visited. The third presence was strangely familiar, like a forgotten memory that resurfaces with the strongest sense of nostalgia. After a while she guessed that presence must be her mother. She never spoke. She simply watched over Lena in silence, surrounding Lena's hands in her own, tracing patterns into the back of her hand.

Her consciousness faded in and out, and her eyes remained closed, no matter how hard she fought to open them. Scully visited often, talking to Lena softly as she put in an IV and changed her fluids, her bandages and cared for her in that gentle way of hers. Lena took comfort in the gentleness in Scully's voice. Sometimes, Dana would try to speak to her mother, but would eventually sigh and leave quietly, promising to check in again soon. Lena finally tired of fighting for consciousness and gave herself over to the exhaustion that has settled itself deep in her bones.

It was a normal excursion with her mother. Lena was sitting in a grocery cart, swinging her legs, chatting animatedly with her mom who was tense and distracted. Lena watched her mother with a frown, realizing her mom hadn't heard a word she had said about the NOVA program she had watched earlier in the day with her babysitter. Her mother was instead, glancing furtively over her shoulder before pushing the cart around a corner and down another aisle, cursing under her breath.

Lena giggled, "no cursing mommy" before placing her tiny hand on her mother's cheek, "what's wrong mommy. you look scared"

"I'm not scared Mi corazon, I'm...."

Lena corrected her mother softly, "Mommy, we're not supposed to lie"

Her mother sighed, "Your right, we aren't." She gave her little girl a weak smile, "Sometimes I forget just how smart you are little one"

"Of course I'm smart mommy, I'm your daughter" Lena smirked before realizing her attempt at humor isn't calming her mother's nerves any, "Do you need me to be quiet mommy?" Lena knew that sometimes when people came over to the home she shared with her mommy, she had to make sure all her toys were put away, out of sight, and she had to stay in her room and read the short chapter books her mother had purchased her until the guests left. She had asked why, and her mother had shaken her head sadly, explaining that they had to be careful about who knew Lena was her mommy's child.

Her mother frowned and shook her head, "No, keep talking sweetie, I want to hear all about the space shuttle. Tell me again, I'll listen this time, I promise" Lena grinned and launched into her story again, and slowly her mother relaxed. She still hurried through the store, and rushed out to the car, but she was there, present with her daughter. They had a home-cooked meal when they got home, and Lena remembered her mother crawling into her tiny twin sized bed beside her upon Lena's request for storytime. Lena fell asleep to the soft cadence of her mother's voice and gently fingers scraping her scalp.

"I don't want to go Mommy, I'll be good. I promise"

Her mother's expression was so broken. All little Lena wanted to do was make her mommy's hurt go away.

She clung to her mother's neck as her mother wrapped her in warmth and safety, "Mi corazón, te amo tanto. Eres buena pero mami te necesita para estar a salvo"

Lena cried harder and her mother sobbed with her, "It's not forever mi corazón. But mommy has to go stop the bad guys, and I can't do that if it puts you in danger. I can't lose you Lena"

The overwhelming memory was replaced by one of her in a hospital bed, her mommy on one side, Emma on the other, both looking tense and so afraid. She remembered the pain, a pain she was too young to understand, remembered the potency of her mother's fear and anguish. Remembers the

way her mother sang her to sleep with tears streaming down her cheeks, promising little Lena that she will love her to the moon and back as Emma Swan watched over them both, her back firmly against the wall, her posture as rigid and stiff, as the strange outfit she wore, the deep sadness in her pale eyes the only indicator of the affection she felt for them both.

When her awareness returned, the first thing she noticed is the light she can see through her eyelids. It took her a moment to get her eyelids to cooperate and open. She blinked rapidly as light filled her vision, and it took a moment for the blurriness she saw to clear into familiar shapes. Her body was slow to respond to her commands, but everything seemed to work, and nothing was screaming with pain anymore.

She sensed their presence in her room and her eyes found Kara first as she glanced to her right. The blonde was still in her supersuit, slumped way too far forward in the straight backed chair, her head lay next to Lena's arm, her fingers tangled with Lena's. The exhaustion in her face made Lena's heart ache. She wanted to reach out touch her but when she tries to move her free hand, she realized that someone had a hold of that one too. She turns her head slowly to the left and froze in disbelief when she saw familiar brown eyes watching her quietly.

Lena swallowed the emotion that threatened to choke her and croaks out a hoarse, "Mom?"

The brunette broke out into a watery smile, " Hello Mi Corazon, it's been far too long."

Lena's eyes filled with tears at the term of endearment and her mother was seated on the bed beside her drawing Lena into her arms before Lena knew what was happening, " My precious girl, you are safe now"

Everything still retained that dreamlike quality, her body moving more slowly than it should, her thoughts and emotions running amuck. She hesitated for a moment before finding the courage to ask, "Am... am I dreaming? Are you really here?"

“ No love, you're not dreaming, I am really here. And I am not letting you go ever again”

Lena let herself sob as she pressed her cheek into her mother's shoulder, drawing comfort from the way her mother's grip on her tightened, holding her securely. She basked in the warmth and the familiar scent of her mother's perfume. Even after all these years, it hadn't changed. Her mother smelled and felt the same she had all those years ago.

She felt Kara's grip on her hand loosen and she instinctively tightens her hold on the blonde's hand, not ready to let go of either of them yet. Kara gasped and sat up and Lena turned to meet the blonde's gaze.

Kara gave her a weak smile and tried again to pull away but Lena shook her head, “ No, stay. Please”. Her voice is still not fully cooperating with her but it seemed to have a peculiar effect on Kara, who shivered before seeming to calm herself. Kara glanced above her at Lena's mother who nodded.

Kara returned her gaze and whispered, “ Of course Lena, whatever you need”

Lena's brow furrowed at the stutter, and squeezed Kara's fingers in thanks. The blonde stared at their interlocked fingers with an indecipherable expression on her face that worried Lena. Her mother released her gently and helped hold her up until she managed to find the remote and raise the bed so that Lena could sit up comfortably, her shoulder still firmly pressed against her mother's and her mother's arm wrapped snugly around her. Lena tightened her grip on Kara's hand and drew the blonde's hand closer, and managed a small smile when Kara's eyes snapped back to hers.

“Kara” the blonde shivered again and Lena wondered why her voice was having that effect on Kara. She shook off her confusion over the blonde's reaction and continued, “ I'm... sorry for how I left. I... shouldn't have walked out on you like that.”

Kara stared at her, and Lena watched as a flurry of emotions fought for dominance. Guilt won out, “ That was my fault Lena. I should

have told you. I'm so sorry. None of this would have happened if I had told you..."

"Kara, stop it. I'm sure my mother told you, these people have been looking for me for a very long time. They would have found me eventually. It's not your fault"

Her mother quietly agreed, " She's right Kara. It's not your fault she was taken. If the blame rests on anyone's shoulders, it's on mine. I honestly believed giving Lena away would keep her safe. I had no idea that they had found her until it was already too late"

Lena held up her hand, her tone firm, " It's not your fault, either of you. So stop it. I'm safe, and you both are here. That's all I care about"

She glanced between them, noting the hint of pride in her mother's eyes. " You've grown so much Lena. you are everything I thought you would be and more. I am so... proud of you."

" Hey, look who's awake" A familiar friendly voice stated from the doorway. She glanced over and stared, familiar green eyes twinkling with joy, "Emma?"

"Who else would I be?" Emma grinned at her, " You look better kiddo. You gave us quite the scare at the warehouse" She flinched at the memory of the alien impersonator she had killed. She swallowed the pain down and managed a smile, "You look different than I remember"

Emma nodded with a smirk and twirled dramatically, " Back to normal, what do you think?"

" Why do you look younger than mom?" Lena asked frowning.

" Oh, right. That. That's what living under multiple curses and anti aging spells does to you." Emma approached and leaned over her mother to gently wrap Lena in a hug. Lena felt the familiar warmth that accompanied Emma and she smiled, " It's really you this time"

Emma frowned, "Yeah, Scully told me about that. I'm sorry, we didn't know those green assholes were still around, I should have thought to

warn you about that”

“I’m just glad you’re here.”

“ I made you a promise Lena. I never make a promise I don’t keep”

Lena accepted that explanation with a smile.

Kara’s restlessness came to a head and she gently extracted her hand from Lena’s and stood to her feet, “ I’ve gotta go help them with the...” She trailed off when she spotted Lena’s pout over losing her hand and paused as if she was unsure if she was supposed to divulge whatever scheme they were working on. She frowned apologetically, her expression masking whatever she was thinking about from Lena. Lena frowns and watches Kara retreat.

Suddenly, Lena was ready to be out of the hospital bed and busy as well. Lena glanced at Emma and her mom eagerly, “ I can help.”

Emma grinned, “I know you can kiddo, and you will, as soon as Dana clears you. And before you ask, yes we managed to recover the DNA from that asshole”

“ Is he...?”

“Dead? “ Emma sighed, “Normally, I would assume yes, but as Monica pointed out, he seems to have nine lives. Chances are, the whole lion dragging him off to eat him thing was a show.”

Lena shuddered at that news, “Great, so he’s still out there”

Emma’s features darkened into a scowl, “Believe me, he won’t get far before we find him, and when I do, I have a real shapeshifting cat just itching for the chance to get her paws on him and finish the bastard off. It’s kind of her thing”

Lena spotted the fiery redhead she had escaped with and grinned, “Dr. Scully. Please tell me I can get out of this bed!”

Lena felt Her mother stiffen ever so slightly when Scully glanced at them both and offered Lena a warm smile. “ Our patients awake, and eager to help.”

She approached and offered her hand, “ Supervisory Special Agent Dana Scully, it’s a pleasure to finally be able to meet you properly”

Lena grinned and took Dana’s hand warmly, forgetting her mother’s odd reaction for the moment, “ Thank you. You’ve saved my life twice now”

Dana smiled bashfully, “ Once really. I am glad you are feeling better. Let me check your vitals. And if everything comes back okay and you promise to take it easy for another day or so, I could definitely use your help in the lab”

She glances at Monica, “ I mean, if that’s alright with you?”

Lena glanced at her mother and noted the hint of sadness in her eyes as she nodded her assent, “ Lena is an adult, and can decide for herself” She stated quietly.

Lena watched their interaction with interest and noted the way Dana seemed to study Monica for a moment longer, debating how to respond, “ Of course, I didn’t mean to imply otherwise, I just thought... you might want to spend some time alone with your daughter... is all”

Lena nudged her mother with her shoulder as Dana quietly checked Lena’s vitals, her expression clearly asking what was going on between the two. Monica shook her head sadly, and Lena frowned, sensing the same sadness in her mother’s eyes that she had sensed in Kara’s. She gave her mother a pointed look and inclined her head towards Dr. Scully with a clear command in her gaze, *talk to her*. He mother shook her head again and Lena huffed, drawing Dana’s attention.

Lena arched a brow at her, “ Am I clear?”

Dana nodded, “ All clear. You’ve recovered from your encounter with the shapeshifter”

“ Good.” She crawls out of bed and interrupts her mother and Dana who are both trying to put distance between them. “ Nuh uh. I am gonna go find Kara.” When her mother started to protest Lena gave

her a warm smile, “ I’m fine mom, I’ll be down the hall. While I’m doing that, you two... figure your shit out.”

They both stared at her mouths agape as she left the room with purpose. She paused outside the door, realizing she had no idea where to go.

She heard Emma's familiar chuckle, and Emma pointed down the hall, “ You're sad blonde puppy went that way, third door on the left”

Lena stared at Emma confused, and Emma smirked, “ Well.. What are you waiting for. Don't you two have shit to figure out as well?”

Lena glared at her, “ What is it with my mom and Dana?”

Emma sighed, “ That's not my story to tell. But if I had to guess, it's not much different than what's going on between you and Kara, or what was going on between me and Regina yesterday” When Lena saw Lena's confusion she clarified, "Secrets Lena. No matter how well meaning our intentions when we keep them, secrets can destroy relationships."

Lena nodded, then furrowed her brow, “ Regina?” Lena recognized the name and a tall gorgeous brunette ducked her head out from a door behind Emma, “ Yes, someone called me?”

Lena stared at Regina for a moment before grinning widely, “ Oh... that means!”

Emma nodded gleefully as her family slowly emerged from the room Regina had come from, “ You're all safe, and back together again? That's awesome Emma. I'm so happy for you!”

Emma opened her arms and Lena accepted the hug with joy. “ And now you are home with your family too Lena.”

Lena started to cry, “ Thank you so much. I've... been so alone.”

Emma nodded, pressing an affectionate kiss in Lena's hair, “ You will never be alone again. You have your mom, Dana, probably Mulder, definitely Kara. and you know my crazy family is yours too.”

Lena laughed as Regina swatted the blonde's arm lightly, " Care to introduce your *crazy* family to the latest addition?"

Emma grinned sheepishly, " Lena, meet Regina, my..." Emma hesitated, suddenly unsure of herself and Regina arched a perfectly manicured brow at her and turned to Lena, offering her hand " I'm her partner, and these are our children"

"I've heard so much about you Ms. Mills." When Regina glanced at Emma in surprise Lena hastily added, " All good things too. Emma spoke of you often. She adores you..." Regina blushed.

She gestures to the girls standing beside her, "Lexa and her partner Clarke, and Lexa's twin sister Raven."

Lena frowned, " Isn't there another one? Harry. No that's not right.. Hen..."

"Henry. " Regina finished with a smile. " He's back in Storybrooke, along with the rest of our family, making sure everyone there is safe until we can return"

Lena grinned, " I am so happy you are all back together again. It's never easy to be separated from the people you love"

Lexa arched a brow and stated softly, " Speaking of people you love, aren't you *Kara's* Lena?"

Kara told them about me? Her heart jumped at the thought and she stamped it down and frowned, " Um..."

Lexa laughed, "She told us about you when we arrived, told me I reminded her of you."

Lexa inclined her head down the hall, " She's been worried sick about you, and even though you are awake now... She still looks sad. You should go talk to her. I find that the longer one waits to say what needs to be said, the harder it is to say"

Lena stared at the brunette, stunned by her wisdom and nodded, " Okay, I'm just going to..." She turns around awkwardly and groans internally. *What in the world am I going to say to Kara?*

“ Start with the truth” Emma stated gently and Lena realizes she had voiced her fears aloud. She glanced at Emma who was looking at Regina with open adoration, “ I find that generally is a good place to start”

Lena nodded, and realizing the entire Swan-Mills family was giving her encouraging smiles, slowly headed down the hall towards Kara, her heart hammering in her chest. She hesitated outside the door for a long moment until Kara sees her on the other side of the glass. Kara froze and Lena gathered her courage, opening the door and stepping inside, “Kara”

Kara’s expression morphed into a wry grin, “Hi, what can I do for you Ms. Reyes?”

It took her a moment to recognize how she’s been greeted, and immediately the tension between them fades.

She smiled at Kara and Kara doesn’t put distance between them anymore when Lena stepped forward, “ I was hoping we could talk”

Kara evaluated her for a moment and nods, “ Alright.” she pointed to a nearby chair, “ Have a seat. How are you feeling?”

Lena frowned at her, “ I’m fine. I was hoping we could talk about the other day?” She asked, trying to keep a lid on the hope trying to seep into her tone.

“Oh.” Kara stiffens, before meeting Lena’s gaze with tears in her eyes, “ I’m sorry.”

Lena nods, “ Me too. I was so angry, and I didn’t stop to actually hear you out, and I’m sorry”

Kara starts to argue but Lena steps forward, taking Kara’s hand between her own, startling her into silence, “ But I’m ready to listen now, if you are still willing...”

Kara stares at their hands for a long time before looking up, “ I thought I lost you. My worst nightmare almost came true. I thought keeping my identity from you would keep you safe, would protect you...” She sighs heavily, “ I’m so sorry Lena. you have to believe me,

it had nothing to do with you being a Luthor. I... was... am so afraid of losing you”

Lena’s heart clenched at the fear in her friend’s voice, “ Your worst nightmare?”

Kara nodded, “ When the people I love know who I am... It puts them in danger. Too many know already. I nearly lost my sister because of some crazy lunatic with a vendetta against me. Every time a new enemy crops up, I’m terrified, not for myself, but for Alex, you.. My friends. I just lost Mon - El and then there you were demanding the truth of me and it.. Just... terrified me. My worst nightmare is someone hurting the people I love and me not getting there in time, not being able to save them and I thought the best way to keep you safe was for me to keep you in the dark...”

Lena swallowed the lump in her throat and asked, unable to bite the words back any longer, “ You love me?”

There’s so much hope in her voice and Kara just stared at her like she’s lost her mind for several long moments and Lena nearly pulled away from the intensity of the blonde’s gaze when she finally shook her head in disbelief, “ How could you even ask me that? How could you really not know that by now? How could you ever think I would turn my back on you because of your last name?”

Lena shudders at the hint of anger and disbelief in Kara’s voice but meets the blonde’s gaze again when she recognizes the desperation underneath, “ I ignored my friends, several times when they suggested that you were working with Lillian, because I know you, because I believe in you, and yes, Lena, because I love you. And I refuse to lose you, least of all to that arrogant, smug selfish bitch who has the gall to try to manipulate you with lies and call herself your mother.”

Lena felt the tears slipping down her cheeks and Kara pulled Lena closer and opened her arms, engulfing Lena in the feeling of safety, whispering against her hair, “ I love you so much it scares me sometimes”

Lena clung to her, “ I love you too Kara” Kara froze for a moment at

those words but resumed rubbing soothing circles into Lena's spine as she held her close.

Lena let her until Kara unintentionally wondered aloud, " Somehow, I don't think we mean the same thing when we say that"

Lena was the one to freeze this time, pulling back to see a loneliness and confusion in Kara's gaze that made her own heart swell with... something she refused to label. Kara panicked, " Shit, you didn't hear that. Can we pretend I didn't just say that and fuck everything up?"

Lena swallowed at the desperation in Kara's eyes and decides that yes, for now, she would let it go, because Kara seemed as confused by what she was feeling right now as Lena was.

"Okay" She whispered, laying her head back on the blonde's shoulder, hugging her fiercely, " for now"

Kara nodded, relaxing back into the hug, although her shoulders don't lose their stiffness, " I'm just glad you're home safe, and your real mom isn't a scary evil bitch bent on destroying the world."

Lena laughed even though her heart still ached and her mind was desperately trying to figure out why Kara was drawing out a confusing mess of emotions in her that had it been a man, she would call romantic inclinations. She hadn't felt so strongly for someone in a very long time and Kara's confession of being terrified resonated with her as well.

She shoved those feelings away, content to rest in the safety her friend was willingly offering, " Yeah, my mom's pretty great"

She could feel Kara's smile, "Yes she is. You deserve that, someone to love you and protect you like that. That's real love"

Kara hesitated the released Lena with a smirk, " Although, I would hate to be on her badside"

Lena laughed, "Somehow I don't ever see that happening"

Kara grew serious, " Tell me we are okay."

Lena nodded, “ We are better than okay Kara. she seems to adore you, Emma too.”

“ Everyone loves a superhero in a cape” Kara deflects the compliment with a wave of her hand and Lena laughs, “ They love your heart Kara, not the cape. I seem to recall someone telling me to be my own hero. That someone is a hero because of their courage, their ability to draw out the best in people, their capacity for love”

Kara blushes, “ Yeah yeah, I’m awesome, yada yada yada, keep that up, I’m gonna get a big head so you might want to quit flattering me.”

Kara glances at her watch, “ Hey, I need to go check in Scully, see if the rocket launcher is ready yet.”

“Rocket launcher?”

Kara grinned, “ Yeah, the one you used to launch the fake Medusa virus. Scully and Emma’s daughter Raven have been working with Winn to modify it.”

“ To do what exactly?”

Kara’s brow furrowed, “ Um... complicated... sciency stuff? I’m useless with the science, I’m better at beating up the bad guys. you know that. Come on, they can explain it better than I can”

11. The Truth Hurts

Notes for the Chapter:

ehm... super long chapter with lots of Monica and Dana angst... and um.. plot twist? Oops. Lol. This one blindsided me too.

Just to reiterate, none of the good guys die. I promise. Crap, that probably gave you a preemptive heart attack. Anyways... Read on my friends.

Monica watched her daughter leave with a sigh, Lena's last words before disappearing down the hall ringing in her ears. Her daughters ability to accurately pinpoint precisely what was bothering her had only improved as she got older.

Scully stepped in front of her, her expression sad yet hopeful, "Monica, talk to me, please?"

"What is there to talk about? You made your position quite clear the last time we saw each other"

Dana huffed, "That was before... before I knew you had an adult daughter, before I understood why you helped him. Please, I didn't listen to you before, I jumped to my own conclusions, and I shut you out. It was unfair of me and wrong. I don't do that to people. Mulder does, and... I don't our friendship to sour like mine and Mulder's did"

" You two seem pretty close to me" Monica flinched at the bitterness in her own voice and Dana just gave her that soft knowing look that always melted her anger away when they were both younger and freer but it doesn't hold the same sway over her anymore. There's too much history, and far too many secrets between them now.

Monica turns away, " I'm going to go see if there's anything useful I can be doing."

Dana sighed, "Monica, wait"

"What Agent Scully?" Monica turned and met the redhead's gaze, fire

in her eyes.

Dana flinched at the use of her title but stepped closer, her tone soft, “ Please. I want... I need to fix this. Tell me how”

“ You can’t fix this Dana, there’s nothing to fix. We were never as close as you thought we were, and that’s all there is to it. I’m sorry if I ever gave you the wrong impression, but we aren’t friends” Monica knew she was being hateful but she couldn’t bring herself to care. Shutting Dana out was easier than addressing the distance that had crept between them over the years.

Dana wasn’t buying it, though the words clearly cut through her like a knife, she still approached, taking Monica’s hands into her own, and meeting Monica’s gaze with steel in her own, “I’ve hurt you, I know that. I used you, over and over again, and I became reliant on the fact that when I needed you, you would always be there, never stopping to think about what my selfishness was costing you. I’m sorry for that. I had no idea when I was suffering through that year alone with William, and the awful months afterwards when I was forced to make the hardest decision of my life, that you were suffering too. It never even occurred to me.”

Monica turned away, her walls still firmly in place, “ Dana...”

“ I’m sorry that I couldn’t be trusted with your secret. I wish I could go back and be the kind of friend to you that you were for me. I truly do. I want to be there for you now, if you’ll let me. I want to get to know you Monica. I know it’s far too late to be her godmom like you were for William, but... I would love the chance to get to know Lena. I want us to be in each other’s lives again” Dana’s voice cracked and Monica glanced at her, not at all surprised to see the tears in Dana’s eyes. William was still an open wound for the redhead and her own daughter was a painful reminder of Dana’s reality.

Monica sighed, “ Dana... I didn’t tell you because I couldn’t. I couldn’t tell anyone about Lena. No one at the FBI knew I was even pregnant. I took a leave of absence, told everyone my family needed me.”

Dana nodded, glancing at their joined hands, “ I’m sorry you went

through that alone Monica. No one should have to suffer through losing a child alone and I am so sorry that I was so wrapped up in my troubles with Mulder to see you were hurting”

Monica sighed heavily, “ It’s in the past Dana, there’s nothing either of us can do to change it now”

She pulled away gently and Dana called after her, “ I mean it. I want to be there now Monica. I want to be the friend you deserved. Can we... Would you be willing to give me a chance?”

Monica hesitated, the lump in her throat growing, “ I’m not sure that’s a good idea Dana”

“Why not?”

Monica swallowed, her hands twisting nervously, “ You’re with Mulder again... and...”

Dana’s brow furrowed, and Monica knew she had said too much. Any second now Dana would put two and two together, “ Why would my working with Mulder prevent us from being friends?”

Monica heard the way Dana explained her relationship with Mulder and paused, “ you aren’t dating Mulder?”

“God no. been there, done that. We are barely even friends, so I am really confused as to how my working with him would impact my friendship with you” Monica tried to backpedal, “ It won’t but... it’s... complicated, I’d rather not get into it”

“Get into what Monica? Do you think I am going to get back with Mulder? What does that have to do with us?”

“Everything” Monica spat, turning on her heels to flee, but Dana caught her arm, turning her back around and spotted the tears in Monica’s eyes she was desperately trying to hide.

Her tone was low, and gentle, reminding Monica of the soft tones she would watch Scully use to comfort her infant son fifteen years ago, “ I can’t fix it if you don’t talk to me Monica. There used to be a time where we knew what the other was thinking, and it’s entirely my

fault, but I can't read your mind anymore. I need you to tell me what's eating at you"

" You can't fix it Dana. It's not your fault, it's entirely mine"

Dana wouldn't let the matter drop though, " You don't like Mulder, you never have. I've known that, but I've never understood why." She eyes Monica quietly, " Tell me why"

" You won't like the answer Dana, let it go" Monica warned but Dana ignored her, shaking her head, " I want to know. Tell me"

"He left you. When you needed him most, Mulder was nowhere to be found. He left you and your friends were left to pick up the pieces while he hid like a coward" She blurted out, the anger rising up again.

Dana stared at her for a long moment as the words sank in, her eyebrows lifting in surprise, " But..."

Monica waved her hand in exasperation, " I know, I know, you told him to go, and I get that, I do. His life was in danger. But so was yours, and William's. And when you needed him the most, to protect you, to hold you, and grieve with you, he wasn't there. He left you alone Dana to raise your child alone, and didn't even bother to come be with you when you were forced to give william up and still you gave up everything for him. You never held that against him, but, you deserved better than to be trapped with someone who will never put you first"

"So you've held it against him for me?" Dana tried to read her again, giving her that look that told Monica that she wasn't far from learning the whole truth now.

Dana whispered softly, " Mulder left. You're right about that. But I was never alone, Monica. I had my friends, John, Skinner..." She paused, "I had you" Dana weighed her next words carefully, "Why?"

Monica arched a brow and Dana hurried to clarify, " Why do you care so much? Why get so angry on my behalf. I don't understand..."

Monica shook her head, " I don't either"

“ I think you do. I think there’s something you aren’t telling me. You’re afraid if you tell me the truth it will push me away again.”

Monica glared at her but Dana smiled, “ Perhaps I can still read you after all”

Monica scoffed. She wanted to flee the room, hide from this conversation that opened old wounds. “ I need to go find Lena”

Dana nodded, “ She’s busy at the moment, *figuring her shit out* with Kara. And if I recall, she’s wants us to figure ours out as well, and for my part, I’m actually trying.” The amusement in Dana’s gaze made Monica’s heart flutter.

Monica glared at Dana for using her daughter against her but Dana just arched a brow, “ Come on Monica, talk to me. Why is being my friend a bad idea, and don’t tell me because of Mulder, because I know it’s more than that”

Monica couldn’t hold it in anymore, and she blurted out the truth, much to her own dismay. “You are still in love with Mulder, and you always will be. I accepted that a long time ago. You will never feel for me what you feel for him, and frankly, seeing you with the man who has abandoned you over and over again just hurts too damned much. So no Dana, I can’t be your friend. I care about you far too much to ever *just* be your friend, and while I will always protect you, I can’t be around you anymore. I can’t stand the idea of being around to see you look at him the way I look at you. And I know I don’t deserve you, with all the secrets between us, but if I don’t deserve you, he sure as hell doesn’t either”

Understanding dawned in Dana’s gaze and she stared at Monica, mouth open slightly, stunned into silence by the emotion in Monica’s voice.

There was no taking it back now, so instead, Monica fled, ignoring Dana as she called after her, “Monica wait!”

Alex saw Monica dart past her tears streaming down her cheeks and glanced at Maggie, “ Be right back.”

Maggie nodded her assent, her dark eyes full of concern for Monica and suddenly Alex was chasing Monica down, tugging her into a conference room, “ Hey. what happened?”

Monica sobbed, her knees buckling under her. Alex caught her swiftly, directing her into the nearest chair, sitting across from her, “ Talk to me Reyes. What’s wrong?”

Monica just wept and after a moment, Alex gave up trying to get her to talk and instead pulled the older woman closer, wrapping her in a warm hug. “ It’s okay, let it all out. You’ve been through hell, it’s perfectly understandable to melt down”

Monica barely heard her.

She was so lost in her own grief she didn’t hear someone else come in until she heard Regina sigh, “ Oh dear.” The brunette sat on the other side of her, pressing tissues into her hands before placing a hand gently on her shoulder. Monica slowly relaxed and after a moment, felt the calming energy Regina was sending into the brunette.

When she was calm, Monica sat up straighter, wiping her nose and eyes with the tissue, the two worried brunettes watching her closely.

“ Wanna talk about it?” Alex asked gently.

Monica glanced at Regina who gave her a nod of encouragement before she spotted something in Monica’s eyes. She arched a brow at Monica and Monica sighed, confessing softly, “ I just... blurted it out... and ran”

“ Oh dear” Regina stated again and Monica released a short bark of laughter to avoid breaking down all over again, “Exactly”

“ I’m guessing she didn’t take it well?” Alex asked, frowning.

Monica shrugged, staring at her hands twisting in her lap, “ I don’t know. I didn’t really give her time to process it before I ran. I just... I told her before I knew what I was saying and then, I just panicked.” She looked at Regina, finding a level of understanding she was unused to in the brunette’s eyes, “ I never wanted her to know. She doesn’t feel the same way. She’s still head over heels for Mulder...”

Regina sighed, “As long as you’ve been bottling those emotions inside, it was bound to come out eventually Monica”

She handed the brunette more tissues, “ You both need time, to process and deal with everything that’s happened. Everyone’s emotions are running high right now. You just reunited with your daughter, that has to be drawing out some painful memories for Scully as well. Realizing she never knew about one of the most intimate parts of your life, being reminded of the fact that she gave her own son up...”

Monica caught the glint of emotion in Regina’s eyes, “ It’s not easy for you and Emma either I imagine, having just gotten your own girls back”

Regina waved off her concern, “ We are dealing, as best we can. Don’t worry about us dear.”

Monica nodded, “ You are so lucky, you know that right? To have someone who loves you as much as Emma does...” She turns to Alex, “You too.”

Alex nodded, smiling, “ Yeah, Maggie is pretty amazing.”

Monica nodded, feeling calmer and more in control. She squeezed their hands, “ Thank you.” She glances at the door, “ I need to work, focus on something else. How’s the plan coming along?”

Regina gave her a brief smirk of understanding “Kara is with Lena, working on reprogramming the rockets, Raven and Winn are working on the devices that will repair the ozone layer. Mulder and Scully are trying to track down CSM.”

Regina squeezed her shoulder when Monica flinched at the mention of Mulder’s name, and broke in, “Emma is working with Cat Grant and the President to gain access to the emergency alert system, so we can let people know what’s about to happen and what to expect. Clarke and Lexa are working with J’onn to coordinate the relief effort with the world’s leaders. Z and Abby are working with Maggie to make sure hospitals are prepared to switch from treating the diseases to radiation poisoning”

Monica arched a brow, “ You all are efficient”

Regina smirked, “ We’ve dealt with our share of disasters dear. I’ve been in contact with Storybrooke to ensure they are prepared for an influx of radiation poisoning as well.”

Regina glanced at the clock on the wall, “I best get back, I’m holding a virtual town hall in ten minutes to prepare storybrooke, are you going to be alright?”

Monica nodded, “ I’ll be fine. My daughter is safe, and that’s all I can really hope for at this point.”

Regina sighed gently placing her hand on Monica’s shoulder, “ Don’t give up Monica”

Monica shook her head“ She’s straight, and head over heels in love with Mulder. There’s really no point in pursuing it further”

Regina laughed and Monica glared at her, “ I’m sorry dear, I’m not laughing at you. It’s just... Dana Scully is definitely not straight.”

Monica’s brow furrowed, “How could you possibly know that?”

Alex chuckled, “Regina is right. Dana is a lot of things, Straight isn’t one of them.”

Monica shook her head, “ In the entire time I’ve known her, she’s shown no interest in women whatsoever”

Regina patted her hand, “ Because she’s only interested in one dear. You”

Monica refused to believe what she was hearing, “ I doubt it. Look, can we drop it, please? I need to focus on something else.”

Regina nodded, “ Mulder was looking for you. Something about needing your help to find CSM?”

Monica sighed, “Great. He’s the last person I want to talk to right now”

Regina chuckled, “ Well, from the way he grimaced when he admitted he needed your help, he’s about as pleased by the prospect as you are”

Monica panicked, “ You don’t think he knows do you?”

Regina frowned, “ Dear, I think the only two people who don’t know about you and Dana... are you and Dana”

Monica really didn’t want to face the man now. She frowned and Alex sighed gently offered to accompany her. Monica shook her head, “ I can handle Mulder, I’d just... rather not is all. I’ll be fine”

The two brunettes took turns giving her a strong hug before parting ways with her. Sighing, she gathered her courage and set of in search of Mulder.

Lena and KAra found her, Lena’s expression worried and Monica knew she had heard about Monica’s outburst. Her daughter wrapped her arms around her mom wordlessly, and Monica sighed, relaxing into the hug. Kara hung back though it was clear that she wanted to hug Monica as well. Lena released her and Monica gestured Kara over with a weak smile.

The younger Danvers practically launched herself at Monica, engulfing her in a bear hug, “ It’s gonna be okay Momma Reyes, I promise. Give it time, and don’t give up”

Monica released her with a smile, “ That’s sweet Kara”

She glances between her and Lena, “ Everything good?”

Kara nods, failing to mask a lingering hint of sadness in her blue eyes and Monica arches a brow. Kara rushes to reassure her, “ Yeah, we’re good.”

Monica glances at her daughter who confirms this with a nod, “ Kara, we need to go find Winn and Raven? God knows what those two are getting up to...”

Monica smiles, “Go. I’m fine, I promise” She whispers to Lena as she passes, “ Tell her”

Lena frowns and points down the hall, “ You first”

Monica arches a brow, “ I already did. It didn’t go well”

Kara waits further down the hall trying to give them privacy, and Lena sighs, “Mom, I love you. But blurting it out and promptly fleeing is not a healthy way to communicate your feelings for someone”

Monica nearly cried, “ Who told you?”

Lena inclines her head towards Kara, “She heard it”

Monica sighed, “ Of course she did. I forgot about the super-hearing”

Lena gave Kara a meaningful look and the girl nodded, “I’ll just meet you down there”

They watched her go and Monica turned back to her, “ What’s wrong? You say you worked things out but you both still look sad.”

Lena nodded, “ I’m so confused mom, I’ve.. never had feelings like this for a girl before and it... it scares me”

Monica sighed, “I know how you feel. But unlike Scully, Kara is crazy about you.”

“She hinted that, but... I’m terrified. I don’t know how to do this. I don’t want to mess it up and lose her. I’d rather be her friend than nothing at all.”

“ I know I’m one to talk, but you need to talk to her. Communicate your feelings clearly Lena. Don’t make her guess. She loves you. Honestly, from the little time I’ve known her, she’s waiting for you, and she will keep waiting. So take your time. You don’t have to figure this out right now” She glanced down the hall, “ Just don’t make my mistake and wait too long”

Lena shook her head, smiling slowly, “ I know you think it’s too late, but trust me, it’s not. Dr. Scully is lucky to have you in her life, and she knows it”

Monica sighed and decided to change the subject, “Emma suggested we eat with them tonight, are you okay with that?”

Lena smirked, “ Subtle... changing the subject” Monica’s desperation must have shown in her eyes because Lena hugged her again, “ Of course I would be happy to have dinner with the Swan-Mills. I haven’t had a chance to really get to know them yet, but they seem pretty amazing”

Monica nodded seriously, “ They are. Come find me when you are done. Okay?”

Lena grinned, “ Of course.” she set off down the hall with a smile and Monica sighed as she watched her daughter round the corner before ducking her head back to call, “ I love you mom!”

Monica smiled at her, “ I love you too Mi Corazon”

Lena flushed and ducked out of sight. Monica waited a moment longer, reluctant to let her daughter out of her sight just yet but decided to face the inevitable and headed to the office Alex directed her to. She knocked on the door and heard a chair scrape back suddenly as she opened the door. Mulder was hastily pulling himself away from Dana, looking hurt and Dana was flushed, and ... angry?

She glanced at Monica who stood frozen in the doorway unsure how to react. Mulder was looking anywhere but at Monica as he brushed past her and out of the room muttering, “ She’s all yours”

Monica decided she wanted no part of whatever was just occurring between the two and turned to leave when Dana called after her, “ It’s not what it looked like Monica”

She paused, retorting, “ I really don’t care Dana. If you’ll excuse me, I need to go find CSM”

Dana’s hand latched on her arm, “No.”

Monica eyebrow arched, “No?”

“No, you aren’t running away from me again, you are going to come in here and talk to me”

“ Why would I do that?”

“ Because you told me you had feelings for me and ran away before I could even process what you said, let alone respond”

“ Yeah, and less than an hour later, I walk in to find Mulder making a move on you”

“ Yes, Mulder trying to make a move on me,” Scully corrected, “ unsuccessfully”

“ Because I walked in and interrupted”

Dana sighed, “I told you, it’s not what it looked like. I refused him just before you knocked on the door Monica.”

“ It really doesn’t matter Dana I have work to do.”

Dana held onto her arm, “So you are just going to run away from me again? Really?”

“ We don’t have time to just stand here and argue over this Dana. people are dying out there”

“ You think I don’t know that? You think I don’t know people are getting sick? That people are dying? Mulder nearly the other night. And CSM saved him.”

That made Monica pause, “ CSM actually saved Mulder?”

Dana ran a hand through her red hair, hesitating before finally confessing softly, “ He *just happened* to have a bag of my son’s blood on hand Monica. He gave Mulder a transfusion on the ship” Dana sighed, “ that’s really not how I wanted to tell you that...”

Monica felt her heart seized with fear once more, “ So CSM has your son? Why didn’t you say anything?! We would have searched the warehouse”

Dana raised a hand calmly, far more calmly than Monica would have, “ First of all, we don’t know CSM has him. CSM claims he doesn’t. Second, he wasn’t at the warehouse, so *if* CMS has him, he’s holding

him somewhere else. Third, I wasn't going to make that trip to the warehouse to save us about me."

Monica shook her head in disbelief, " It's William, Dana, you gave him up to protect him from CSM, and you are standing here, calmly telling me CSM might have him?!"

"And you literally just got your daughter back from the same man. Mulder is pretty sure CSM doesn't have William, though he likely knows where he is. That's why we need to find them both, before CSM finds him. I have to believe William is okay until I have proof otherwise"

"What can I do to help?" Monica's own pain was forgotten. Dana needed her, her godson needed her and she would be damned if CSM laid a hand on another child she loved. Dana pointed to a chair, " You can sit. And talk to me."

Monica met the redhead's eyes, "Dana..."

"Please Monica." Scully's voice was gentle, her eyes pleading with Monica to trust her.

Monica sucked in a breath through her teeth, staring at the chair with trepidation, " Fine"

She sat in the edge of the chair and waited for Dana to close the door and sit across from her.

Monica stared at her hands, until smaller hands covered her own. "How long?" Dana asked softly.

Monica glanced at her, feigning ignorance, "How long what?"

Dana gave her the look she hated, the one that said, *I know you. You're avoiding the question.*

"How long... have you had feelings for me?"

Monica wanted to cry, " Dana.. please... it doesn't matter"

Dana sighed, squeezing Monica's hands before stating, " It matters, to

me.”

Monica shook her head, “ I never should have said...”

“ Stop. Don’t you dare take it back” Dana stated angrily. Monica stared at her in surprise and Dana softened, “ It’s just... I never thought..” She sighed, finding expressing herself difficult. Monica waited patiently, Regina’s soft assurances earlier that all hope was not lost freezing her in place.

Dana pulled her hands back, and started again, “ What you saw.. What you thought you saw... when you walked in here. Mulder did try to kiss me. One minute we were discussing William, and the next... he was leaning in and I... froze for a moment, and then shoved him away. I didn’t kiss him back Monica. I meant what I said, I have no interest in rekindling any type of relationship aside from friendship with him.”

Monica didn’t speak, and Dana pleaded, “ Monica, look at me. Say something...”

Monica whispered, “ What do you want me to say Dana?”

Dana waited a moment longer and leaned forward, her smoky blue eyes meeting Monica’s chocolate ones, “ I don’t know if you realize this, but you are literally the only person I have ever befriended the day I met them. At first... I was cold towards you, I... made assumptions about you... but you surprised me, when I found you later.”

Monica nodded. She remembered the day they met well. Until William left in the arms of a stranger, Dana had referred to it as the worst day of her life. Mulder had been missing and after searching desperately for him, They had found him dead. Monica was there for her, though an emergency of her own had prevented her from being present for Mulder’s funeral. Months later, Mulder resurfaced alive, and by then, Monica was protecting a pregnant Scully from the super soldiers.

“ Monica, I’ve never had a friend like you before. I’ve never been as close to someone as I was with you. You have saved my life so many

times. You saved William, more than that, you helped me care for him that first year. And I took that for granted, I took you for granted, and I am so sorry for that. I let you slip away, when I chose to follow Mulder, and I am sorry for the hurt I've caused you. It was never my intention to hurt you. You... mean the world to me"

Dana hesitated before confiding, " And if I am being honest with myself. I was drawn to you, from the first time we met."

Dana shook her head laughing lightly, "at first, I thought it was your optimism, your personality. You just... shone light wherever you went. No matter what was going on, you seemed to know how to lighten the mood, how to draw out the best in people. I didn't know that I... felt more than friendship for you until that numerology case"

Monica smiled in-spite of herself, "That case was... something else"

Dana nodded with a grin, " Yeah it was. I had never seen you quite so in your element before. It... was breathtaking honestly."

Monica frowned, " But you didn't believe me for the majority of that case... " Dana's earlier statement sunk in, " Wait.. did you just call me breath taking? You have feelings for me?" She couldn't quite believe what she heard.

Dana laughed and Monica's heart swelled at the sound. It had been ages since she heard Dana laugh so freely, " I didn't beleive you for most of that case, it was... bizarre. And I left that case with so many questions... but... when I called you that night..."

Monica noticed that Scully had sidestepped the question, "Asking about your numbers..."

Dana nodded, " I... *was* curious about it of course, but... in truth... that was the first time I called you just to hear your voice."

Monica's heart ached considerably less now and she finally met Dana's gaze to see a warm smile and something else, unnamed in the redhead's eyes. " Are you saying...?"

"If you are asking if I am telling you that I return your feelings and have for a long time? The answer is yes Monica. But I was scared.

Scared of misinterpreting our friendship, and your affection for me. You were so warm to me, so kind and generous but I was afraid to think that it was more than friendship because you pour so much of your heart out to anyone and everyone who needs it.”

Monica shook her head, “ I thought you were straight, and in love with Mulder”

Dana sighed and shook her head, “ I loved Mulder, and part of me always will. But I was never in love with him. I could never regret our son, but I do regret the way he came into this world.”

Monica nodded, “ I can understand that.”

“Lena?” Dana asked gently and Monica nodded, “ I had a... brief affair with her father, who was married at the time”

At the scandalized look on Dana’s face she chuckled, “ Believe me, I know. But as much as I try, I can’t bring myself to regret any of it. Lena came out of that. And when I needed her to be safe, Lionel took her in, protected and loved her until he passed away. He tried his hardest to do right by her.”

“Lionel Luthor?” Dana asked, “ that name sounds familiar”

“ It should. His son Lex is in prison for heinous crimes, and Lillian Luthor leads Cadmus now.”

Dana shuddered, “How could you stand it, knowing your little girl was with them?”

Monica shook her head, “ I had no choice. And Lionel protected her when I couldn’t anymore”

“ Why’d you give her up?” Dana asked gently, there was no judgement in her tone.

“She nearly died when CSM hired someone to kill her. Emma Swan saved my daughter’s life, and helped me arrange her adoption by the Luthors when I was going to send her into the foster system”

Dana shuddered, “ I’m so sorry. No wonder you were so

understanding when I made the choice to send William away”

Monica nodded sadly, “ I had hoped I could keep William safe, keep him with you. I’m sorry”

Dana was shocked by the apology, “ Monica, it’s not your fault. I’ve never blamed you for losing William. I should have thanked you more, shown more gratitude for the sacrifices you made to keep us both safe”

Dana took her hand, “ I’m sorry for a lot of things Monica, taking you for granted, using you...Losing your friendship.. Letting you slip away, being so cruel the other day... My behavior the other day was inexcusable. I know you better than that. I should have given you the benefit of the doubt. You have always protected me”

Monica swallowed knowing what was coming next, and Dana didn’t disappoint, “ I’ve asked you this before, but what did he threaten you with Monica?”

Monica tried to sidestep the question, “ My daughter”

“Nice try, I know he thought Lena was dead when he approached you about joining with him, Emma confirmed that earlier so I know that wasn’t it. You wouldn’t have joined leagues with him unless it was to protect someone you love. I know you”

Monica sighed, wringing her hands nervously, “ He threatened your life” She whispered. Dana leaned forward, “ He threatened to hurt me? How?”

“ He threatened to deactivate the chip” She whispered.

Dana froze, and Monica continued, “ If I didn’t join with him, He would deactivate your chip and your cancer would be back. Mulder’s too”

“Mulder has a chip?”

Monica nodded slowly, “ He’s had one ever since his abduction, although I don’t think our chips serve the exact same purpose as yours.”

“Ours... oh my god Monica... not you too” Dana’s eyes were filled with fear and it took a moment for Monica to realize that fear was for her safety.

“ It’s okay. I’ll be fine”

“ Monica, if he deactivates your chip...”

“ The same thing that happened to you will happen to me. I know. It was a risk I had to take. You deserved the truth.”

“Monica, you could have the cancer now and not even know it. We didn’t know about mine until it was nearly too late!”

“Dana, there’s no point in worrying about it right now. We need to focus on one problem at a time. Okay. Lets focus on stopping him, and saving the sick people we know are sick. When that’s dealt with, we can focus on figuring out if we are”

Dana shook her head firmly, “ Get up, follow me.”

“Dana.”

“ Don’t even think about arguing with me” Dana’s voice surprised Monica. She sounded much like she had when the double agent tried to kill William, angry and desperate. Monica simply nodded numbly and let Dana drag her down the hall to the DEO’s lab without a word.

Lena glanced up and grinned when she saw them holding hands until she saw the alarming expression on Dana’s face. She hastily set down the beaker she had been working on and hurried over, “What’s wrong?”

“Noth...”

Dana smacked her arm, hard, “Don’t lie to her. She deserves the truth, and she should hear it from you”

Monica swallowed nervously when Lena turned fearful eyes on her, “Mom? What is it?”

Dana pushed Lena into a chair beside her mother, “ Wait here. Kara,

go get Emma Swan please”

Kara hesitated until the redhead barked, “Now!”

Kara leapt into action using her super speed to dash out the door. Had Monica not been trying to calm her daughter down, she would have laughed at the absurdity of the situation. As it was, Lena was looking at her like she had betrayed her and Monica sighed, “Lena, it’s probably nothing... but”

Mulder reappeared with Emma who pushed him into a chair beside them and went immediately to Scully. “What do you need me to do?”

Regina was right behind her, “ What’s going on?”

Monica sighed, “ Dana’s making a big deal out of nothing.” She regretted saying anything when Scully glared at her.

“Lena, Monica, Mulder and I need blood work done. We need Kara to use her X-ray vision as well...

Kara dashed back in, “ Heard my name, what do you need?”

“Check us” she hesitates and glances at Monica, and Monica buries her face in her hands, “ Tumours, if you can. I’m not sure how your vision works...”

“Tumors?” Lena asked, “Like, cancer?”

She turned to her mother, “ What the hell is going on?”

Mulder glanced at Monica, and she gave him a brief nod. He sighed heavily, “ figures”

Lena was in full blown panic mode, “ someone explain to me what the fuck is going on, now!” She was hysterical and near tears. Kara wrapped her arms around the brunette and whispered in her ear as Monica met her daughter's fear filled gaze, “ I.. took a risk, when I went to Scully. I joined him to protect Mulder and Scully. When they were taken, both were experimented on, and as a result of those experiments, both are vulnerable to a particular type of cancer, as am I. to counteract this, a chip with advanced genetic coding was

inserted. It prevents us from developing the cancer. I suspect, when Lena was kidnapped, a chip was inserted into her as well. Meaning, all four of us could potentially develop cancer if the chip was removed if deactivated. I was told if I didn't join CSM, he would deactivate the chips. I was also warned that if I ever went against him, and betrayed him, my friends would pay for my disloyalty."

"So CSM gave you cancer?" Lena sounded completely broken.

"Whoa , let's not jump to conclusions just yet Lena" Mulder's expression was surprisingly gentle as he comforted Monica's daughter, "he may have threatened it, but CSM is unpredictable at best. It could have been an empty threat"

Kara had already taken off her glasses and was scanning them each in turn she shook her head when Dana looked at her expectantly, "No tumors that I can see, but that doesn't necessarily mean anything if it's super early stages"

Emma called Abby's cell phone, "Hey Ab's, we need your abilities. Best keep everyone else there, we don't need a panic on our hands. yeah bring Clarke. Okay see you in a minute"

Dana glanced at Emma confused, "What can Abby do?"

"Her sense of smell is remarkable. We've found that she, like many actual animals have the ability to smell illness, and according to abby, cancer has a very particular smell"

Dana nodded, "okay, that should settle whether or not we are currently sick, but I want to run full panels on each of us, just to be safe" Dana drew Mulder's blood, both awkwardly avoiding looking at the other while she worked. She was gruffer than usual handling his arm and Monica nearly smiled. She was clearly still irritated by his attempted kiss.

Kara released Lena and Lena sat once more beside her mother, her voice broken as she whispered, "I just found you, I can't lose you again"

Emma's tone was firm, "You won't. We won't let that happen. Right

now, this is nothing more than a big maybe. And we are checking as a preventative measure.”

Abby arrived, “What’s wrong?” Clarke was right behind her.

Emma pulled Abby off to the side and delicately explained the situation as Clarke stepped into the room and promptly began helping Dana draw blood.

Monica nodded to Lena, “Her first, I can wait”

Clarke nodded, and gently tied the tourniquet around Lena’s arm. Lena didn’t say a word as Clarke carefully located her vein and inserted the IV. She sat rigid and stone faced through the entire ordeal. Clarke gave her a bandage and a kind smile as she passed the vials off to Dana. Clarke carefully drew Monica’s blood next as Dana instructed a tech on what to look for in the blood panels. “Double and triple check it”

Abby approached carefully standing in front of each of the for a long moment before moving on. While she focused, Clarke drew Dana’s blood and handed it off to a tech. She returned to Emma’s side and asked, “Now what?”

Emma nodded to Clarke’s mother who was now standing in front of Monica, “Now... we wait”

Notes for the Chapter:

Just curious... how many people are following this story? I've had a handful of commentators so far. just curious if there's interest in the story... not that I won't keep working on it if just wolfie and the couple of others are reading, but with as many people who were interested in a sequel, only a handful actually seem to be reading it. lol.

hopefully I am weaving the characters together well enough. I've been a bit insecure about this story. it's a LOT of characters to tie in and I don't feel like I am getting to spend as much time on each one. let me

know your thoughts... I'm trying to weave more of the base characters from brave enough back in. so.. next chapter will probably be from one of their points of view. also... is it just me or is this universe Hella GAY? almost all the ships in this are lesbians, and i'm totally cool with that but I try to throw in hints that straight couples exist happily here too. don't want anyone feeling left out. speaking of which... I've figured out who I am gonna pair Raven with, and It's likely not who you expect...

anywho, next chapter in a day or two... ;-)

12. FisHeda

Notes for the Chapter:

Warning: Longest chapter yet... oops.

Shoutout to Wolfie for helping me correct an assumption about Kara that I made based on the show.... Kara is now hopefully portrayed more accurately as the science geek she truly is. Thanks Wolfie.

also, per numerous requests, this is a Clexa heavy chapter, with lots of Clexa fluffy moments, something that given the pace of this story and the constant angst is sorely needed. lol.

Oh, and because it's Clexa, there's lots of trigedasleng, because it is Lexa's first language and to ignore that would be to ignore a key part of who she is, which is why this chapter took so long, because I actually take the time to string real sentences and conversations together and that can be a bit of a bear at times.

Also: shoutout to whoever pointed out that Lexa is likely overwhelmed by everything going on, I address that in this chapter as well.

Clarke sensed the tension the moment she followed her mother through the glass doors that separated the lab from the rest of the DEO. Abby immediately went to Emma while Clarke hesitated. The short fiery redhead she recognized from the warehouse motioned her over and asked her to draw blood on Lena.

Clarke worked quickly, catching bits of the conversation among the others, but her attention focused on the task at hand while watching Kara and Lena. Kara seemed at a loss, and Clarke could sense the young woman's fear for the women on the other side of the room. Kara reminded Clarke of Emma. aside from the obvious differences, they were actually fairly similar.

Kara loved people ferociously. She seemed to take any threat to them personally.

She finished drawing Lena's blood, still sensing Kara's tension hovering behind her, as if Kara was worried Clarke might harm Lena and was ready to step in. She turned around and nodded to Kara, who seemed to relax.

Lena however was still as stone. While she didn't move and seemed unaware of her surroundings, Clarke could hear the woman's heart beating erratically and knew Lena was afraid of losing her mother yet again. Clarke gave the young CEO a gentle squeeze of the hand before moving on. Once she finished, Dana swept the vials away, barking orders at the lab tech. Clarke sidled up to Emma, "What now?"

"Now... we wait"

Abby was checking each of the four in turn, pausing for a long moment in front of them before moving on. She stood in front of Scully the longest, her brow furrowed and everyone tensed before Abby sighed, "Everyone's clear, for the moment anyway."

She glanced at Scully, "You need to be careful though. I'm guessing from your scent, You've had it before and that makes you more vulnerable to relapsing"

Scully nodded," We will run the blood panels, and if there's anything there, we will find it. For now though, let's get back to the task at hand"

Everyone started dispersing and Clarke watched the tension slowly leave the room as everyone headed back to their duties. Except for Lena, who still seemed frozen in place. Clarke watched her for a long minute, and glanced at Kara who was chewing on her lip as she watched Lena stare at nothing. Monica tried to comfort her daughter but even that wasn't working.

Clarke sighed and glanced at Emma who seemed to sense what she was about to do.

Emma smirked before leaving them alone, "Just don't leave this room. We don't need a repeat of the tower in Polis"

Kara furrowed her brow, "Polis?"

"The capital city Lexa ruled from before we had to leave it behind and come here."

" So what incident?"

Clarke just smiled and asked, " Got a room where I can change?"

It took Kara a moment to grasp why Clarke needed privacy and actually grinned, "Really?"

Clarke glanced at Lena who was clearly still not listening and lowered her voice, " I mean, as long as you are okay with me..."

Kara glanced at Lena and back at Clarke blushing furiously, "Yeah, no. I mean... I don't mind..." Clarke smirked, " I have a partner Kara. I'm not making a move on yours, just trying to help her calm down"

Kara laughed nervously, " She's not my .. we aren't... it isn't... like that." She sighed, " Rao, I couldn't be more unconvincing if I tried, could I?"

Clarke smirked, " Oh, I don't know, you might surprise yourself" she hesitated, "don't give up on her yet. She loves you. It's just going to take her some time to admit that"

"She already did... sort of"

Clarke arched a brow, " Really? That's awesome"

Kara sighed, " Yeah then I had to go and open my stupid mouth and mess it up"

Clarke laughed, " I highly doubt you've messed it up that bad."

" I hope not. Now.. why do you need somewhere to change?"

Clarke grinned, " Do you normally tear your clothes off in front of people?"

Kara blushed furiously, muttering, " Maybe... sometimes, but my suit

is always on underneath” and pointed to a closet across the room.

Clarke smirked and followed Kara’s instructions to a small closet and closed the door gently behind her. She changed out of her clothes quietly and closed her eyes. Shifting came almost naturally to her now. The more she did it, the easier it became. While her mother hated the change, Clarke craved it, the rush of endorphins and adrenaline in her system was addictive.

Clarke searched for the innate magic in her system that triggered the shift and called it forward. She focused for a moment longer, envisioning what she wanted to shift to carefully in her mind and felt her body comply. The shift took over and Clarke gave herself over to it, relaxing. Zelena had told her that it only hurts if you fight it and that certainly seemed to be true.

Once she had finished she waited patiently for a moment before pawing at the door. Kara opened it and promptly jumped back as Clarke moved past her.

“ You’re gonna give her a heart attack!” Kara hissed and Clarke just blinked at her, trying to convey with her eyes, *trust me* .

It seemed to have the desired effect and Kara stepped out of her way, “ But if you hurt her...”

Clarke growled low in her throat, and Kara chuckled nervously, “ Yeah okay. Good point, go on”

Clarke loped up to Lena slowly, giving the brunette ample time to see her. Huffing softly, she sat on her haunches and waited for Lena to acknowledge her. She knew her eyes lit up with laughter when Lena finally realized a large animal was sitting a few feet from her, staring.

Lena gave a small yelp of surprise before glaring at Clarke, “ Seriously not funny. Which one are you?”

Clarke approached carefully as Kara informed her it was Clarke and Lena let her, apparently deciding any animal looking at her like it’s laughing isn’t dangerous, even if it is a giant white tiger. Clarke snuffed gently as she placed her head on Lena’s knees staring up at

her. It had the desired effect. Lena tentatively reached out, asking for permission and Clarke nodded.

Lena grinned and ran her fingers through soft fur, “Wow. This is... incredible. How... how does it work?”

Soft footsteps approached the lab lightly and Clarke’s eyes lit up. She knew those footsteps. A familiar voice answered Lena, laughter in her voice, “ It’s different for each shifter but for Clarke...Her shifts are tied to her magic. She’s both a shifter and a magic user, entwined. You can’t separate the two with Clarke, which gives her the ability to shift into whatever she wants.”

Lena glanced at the newcomer, “ Hello again Lexa”

Lexa murmured a soft reply as she crossed the room. Clarke could sense that Lexa was overwhelmed by everything going on and had sought out Clarke as a result.

Clarke felt Lexa’s fingers brush gently through her thick coat as she moved to sit beside Clarke on the floor, leaning against Clarke’s side and she hummed in contentment. Lena watched them, her hands still buried in the fur on Clarke’s head, unaware she was still petting Clarke until she suddenly jerked back, “ Sorry”

Heat flushed her cheeks and Lexa laughed, “ Don’t be. Clarke wouldn’t have approached you unless she was okay with you petting her. I suspect she did shifted in an attempt to help you anyway”

Lena glanced at Clarke who snuffed and nudged the brunette, urging her to pet her again. Lena complied with a smile, “ Well... it worked”

Kara carefully approached and sat on Clarke’s other side, slipping fingers into the fur along her spine. Clarke sighed and relaxed, enjoying the attention.

Lexa chuckled and leaned into Clarke, “ You are enjoying this entirely too much Clarke”

Clarke nudged her playfully in response and Lena started to smile, though it faded too quickly, “Where’d everyone go?”

Kara spoke up quickly, “ We are trying to get the plan moving along. Everyone went to work on their part.” She met Lena’s eyes, her voice soft and reassuring, “ You mom is just fine. She’s downstairs helping Mulder put strike teams together to check out CSM’s hideouts”

Lena tensed, “ She’s not going with them is she?”

Lexa shook her head, “ Dana won’t let her or Mulder go anywhere until the bloodwork comes back.

Lena nodded and seemed to calm enough, “ Okay. I should probably get back to work now.”

Clarke leaned in and rumbled when Lena ran fingers through her coat once more, “ Thank you Clarke. I definitely feel more myself now.”

Clarke nodded her large head and her eyes followed Lena to the countertop where Lena quietly picked up where she had apparently left off.

She didn’t move yet, because Lexa was still pressed against her other side, and when Kara and Lena returned their focus to their tasks, Lexa wrapped her arms around Clarke firmly and buried her face in Clarke’s fur coat.

“Ai mema we hou” *I miss home*. Lexa whispered and Clarke leaned into her, sniffing her agreement. Clarke had adjusted fairly easily to Storybrooke, and this realm’s technology wasn’t so different from the ark’s. Still, it had been an adjustment for her, and she knew if she was struggling with being thrown into a new realm, it had to be worse for Lexa. In addition to new surroundings that were entirely unfamiliar, they both were wrestling with the separation from many of Lexa’s people, and now Clarke’s as well. It wasn’t easy to trust strangers to look out for them, even if some of their own people were helping. There was no removing the burden of responsibility they had taken on, no matter what Lexa’s parents thought.

She reached out to Lexa carefully with her mind, *Polis?*

Lexa started in surprise and relaxed, “ *Sha. Nami?*” *Yes, you feel me?*

Sha . Clarke responded, gently nuzzling Lexa, *Ai get in chit yu ste fig*

raun. I know what you are thinking

Lexa murmured, “ Ai get em in. Em hakom ai hod yu in. ” *I know. That’s why I love you.*

Clarke let Lexa burrow further into her. Feeling eyes on her she turned and met Kara’s eyes while she watched them with a sad smile tinged with a hint of envy.

Clarke dipped her head towards Kara, acknowledging her and Kara swallowed, returning her attention to Lena as she was given a task.

She remained with Lexa for a long while, the brunette slipping into one of her meditative states while her arms remained wrapped firmly around Clarke. They both relaxed and enjoyed the few minutes of peace. Clarke was content with keeping watchful eyes on the two women across the room from her while Lexa held her. Since her shifts began, Clarke could feel Lexa’s presence. Emma had described her connection with Regina like a thin invisible cord between them that wrapped it’s way around Emma’s heart and Clarke understood the sensation now. Lexa’s magic naturally entwined itself with Clarke’s and as a result, she could tell exactly what Lexa was feeling. In that moment, Lexa’s calm slipped into her system as well, winding its way through her veins, relaxing and grounding her. She sighed and Lena glanced at them from across the room, smiling at the pair cuddled together on the floor.

Eventually, the calm was enough for her magic to want to shift her back and she gently disentangled herself from Lexa’s gentle hold, nuzzling her once more, *Won tika. One moment*

Lexa nodded, her eyes still closed, slipping into her meditative pose, *Ait. alright*

Clarke loped back to the closet and ducked inside, tugging the door after her with her tail. She let the change take over her, her connection with Lexa somehow helped guide her through it, and she shifted faster than she ever had before. She stood and dressed swiftly, running her fingers through her blonde hair before emerging once more.

She stepped past Lexa quietly, letting her fingers run through the brunettes hair as she passed, smiling at the hum of contentment Lexa gave her without opening her eyes. *Ai na sis au Lena. I'm gonna help Lena.*

Lexa nodded again, eyes still closed, *Kamp raun. Stay near.*

Sha heda.

Lexa smirked lightly, and Clarke left her to meditate in peace.

She approached the two women and Lena greeted her with a smile, “Back in your own skin?”

Clarke nodded with a smile, “For now”

Kara smirked, and Clarke nodded to the vial Lena was working with, “Need any help?”

Lena sighed, “I seem to be missing something. I’ve been working to manipulate the Alien DNA, to figure out how to... reverse it for people who have it against their will. But it’s proving difficult to consistently isolate and target the right genome. It’s almost like they...”

“Move on you?” Clarke asked and Lena nodded solemnly, “That’s exactly what it’s like. Which makes no sense. How can a genome move on it’s own?”

Clarke sighed, “I honestly don’t know. My mother might have an idea or two how to target it. Have you asked Dr. Scully?”

Lena nodded, the frustration evident in her eyes, “She’s having the same problem”

Kara seemed to want to pipe up but hesitated and Clarke arched a brow at her, “Any ideas?”

“Actually... I might.”

Lena glanced at her, “Please, anything helps”

“Well, on Krypton, we had a database of the different types of aliens, and kept copies of their genetic information. I was raised learning about it. The fortress of solitude should still have access to those records.”

“ What would those records do?” Clarke asked

“ I recently discovered that my father used those files to help create the Medusa virus. In other words, his complex understanding of how each alien’s genome behaves in different environments helped create the virus that would target every alien, regardless of environment.”

If Kara noticed that Lena’s jaw had dropped, she didn’t acknowledge it, “ If we can identify what types of aliens were used to create the DNA we are trying to reverse, and can pinpoint how each one behaves on a planet with a yellow sun, then we should be able to predict where to look for the individual genomes in the sequence”

“Types? As in more than one?” Clarke asked and Kara nodded. She points at the microscope and the screen the slide view is attached to, “ I count at least five distinct types of alien DNA, each with their own specific genetic markers. On Krypton we discovered that the genomes change depending on environmental factors, and if we understood the rest of the Alien’s genetic makeup, we could generally predict how a particular genome would react to specific environmental changes. The Human genome does this as well, but much slower than most aliens. For humans they tend to change with age, making humans more vulnerable over time, rather than actually changing to protect and prolong life. Then again, humans are a considerably younger race so it's not surprising that they haven’t evolved the ability for genomes to change to protect humans from hostile environmental conditions. although... “

She paused and evaluated Clarke, “ I suspect, given the specific differences you both hold in your own genetic makeup compared to humans of this realm, that your prolonged exposure to solar radiation helped you and everyone else in your realm evolve in exactly that way. Meaning, your abilities, derive from your genomes having begun to actually adapt to environmental changes to protect you. Otherwise, you both would be considerably weaker and even potentially sick being exposed to a realm with considerably less

radiation than you are used to.”

Clarke nodded her agreement, “ You may be right about that, it would explain why we handled the switch to this realm so well, aside from feeling considerably more fatigue here. Is there a way to find out if your theory is correct?”

Kara sighed, “ I would have to examine them further and compare them to the kryptonian database in order to be able to identify them for sure”

Lena gaped at Kara, “ You said you weren’t good with science...”

Kara laughed, “ Maybe I should have clarified, I still don’t feel like I have a solid grasp on earth science. Anything else? I’m great at. I was training to become a scientist when I was sent from Krypton. Obviously, when I arrived here, my path changed quite a bit. A lot of earth’s science makes no sense compared to the rest of the universe, I mean, carbon based life forms? They are simplistic and outdated at best, and of all the bases, take the longest to evolve. How life evolved on this planet is a mystery.. Life in the rest of the universe doesn’t follow the same rules earth does. That’s why earth scientists have failed to find life outside this solar system yet. They are looking for the wrong markers to determine if intelligent life exists, even though it's becoming more and more common knowledge that other life forms with silicone and other bases are currently cohabiting earth along with carbon based life forms. And I learned pretty quickly that correcting my science teachers drew more attention than I needed, so I focused on learning other aspects of what it means to live on earth.”

Lena was in awe of Kara’s scientific knowledge, “ You have an incredible grasp on genetics and Biology... why did you never tell me? I could have used your help in the lab”

Kara chuckled, “ And how exactly would I have explained my knowledge of space, and alien genetics without giving away the fact that Kara Danvers is also supergirl”

Lena laughed, “ Kara... I hate to break it to you, but I suspected it from the moment we met. I turned around and looked out the window on purpose during that first interview I know Clark Kent is

superman, I have ever since Lex went to prison. I turned around and watched you two scan the room in the window, though without being able to actually see what you saw, I couldn't confirm that. Then there was my prototype of the alien detection device. I know you altered it to accept Kryptonian DNA, but even then I wasn't positive that you had done so because I didn't actually see you do it. So then I invited both Kara Danvers and Supergirl to my party and as suspected, you couldn't be in two places at once. But even then, I didn't have enough evidence."

"You were testing me?" Kara sounded hurt.

Lena sighed, "Look, I wasn't... testing you. You know where I stand on aliens hiding. I think humans have a right to know who their friends are. And while I understand why you kept it from me, I needed to know, especially after Jack, and the thing with my mother. I needed to know so I could protect you, the way you have me."

"So when did you know for sure?" Lexa asked and Lena smiled, "On the Daxomite ship. Mon El told me he could see why Kara loved me. I had already figured out he was Mike, and had discussed that with him. I knew Mike was Kara's boyfriend, and when I found Supergirl on the ship, she was extremely awkward with both of us present. When I asked her about it later, she ignored the question. And that's when I saw it. The final proof"

Kara stared at her, puzzled "What proof?"

Lena hesitated for a moment, her demeanor changing as she stepped into Kara's personal space and Kara backed up nervously until Lena grabbed her arm gently, holding her in place. She reached one finger up and touched the small indentation about Kara's left eyebrow. Clarke smirked at how the gentle touch clearly affected both women.

Lena stared directly at Kara, "One of the first things I noticed about you was this little indentation" Her voice was soft, "At first, I thought it was an oddly placed dimple, because it showed up more prominently whenever you were laughing, or stressed. When I caught you off guard with my question about Mon El... that mark stood out so clearly in the middle of that crinkle you get when you are upset."

“ I hate that crinkle” Kara sighed and Lena laughed, “ I think it’s adorable. And it tells me when you are upset, which comes in handy when you are trying to be a good best friend and your friend won’t tell you that something is wrong”

Clarke smirked at the rather intimate moment between the two. It took a moment for Lena to realize just how close she was to Kara before backing away, blushing herself, “Anyway, between all that and you constantly outing yourself with poorly thought out excuses, it wasn’t hard to put two and two together. Honestly, it shouldn’t have taken me as long as it did”

“ Constantly outing myself?”

“ I flew here... on a bus?”

Kara blushed furiously and Lexa furrowed her brow as she approached, “ I’m guessing a bus is a mode of transport that doesn’t fly?”

Lena laughed, “ Definitely not.”

Kara sighed, “ So you’ve suspected, all this time...and you waited until a few days ago to confront me? Why?”

“ I had to be sure, and I was trying to understand your reasons for keeping it from me. Naturally, the first conclusion I came to was that you didn’t trust me because I am a Luthor. I didn’t realize how much you were sacrificing, or just how little I actually knew about you until now. Kara Danvers... is actually a giant science nerd. Who knew?”

“ I’m sorry. I wanted to tell you Lena, so many times”

Lena waved her concerns away, “ It’s fine. But now that you’ve outed yourself as the giant geek you truly are, let’s get on with this”

Lexa furrowed her brow, “ Aren’t you two supposed to be working on the rockets to repair the atmosphere?”

Lena laughed lightly, “ Raven and Winn are down in the Tech Lab. Apparently, I’ve been replaced as the resident tech genius by Emma’s

daughter Raven”

Lexa flushed, feeling suddenly protective over her twin, “ She’s not replacing you...”

Lena chuckled at Lexa’s defensiveness, “Don’t worry about it. My feelings aren’t hurt. Raven pointed out that we might need the alien DNA situation tackled as well as both a back up plan if this fails, and because we aren’t sure how a sudden influx solar radiation will affect the alien population on earth, nor humans who have found themselves with alien DNA. Frankly, she’s right. Dr. Scully is so frustrated and sick of staring at it, that I offered to give her a break, and let her focus on what she enjoys, hunting down bad guys”

Lexa nodded, “ I suppose that makes sense”

Clarke glanced at Lexa for a long moment, sensing her restlessness before turning to Kara, “ Speaking of hunting down bad guys, Kara... I was wondering...”

“ Yeah, what’s up?”

“ Lexa and I are done for the day and both of us would like to keep up our training. Is there somewhere we can practice hand to hand combat?”

Kara grinned, “ Absolutely, and we’ve got all kinds of fun toys to use as well. Just tell me what you are looking for and I can have the tech set it up for you”

Clarke nodded, “ We just need a room for now, and if you have any knives, that’ll work for now”

Kara grinned, “ Follow me” Kara glanced at Lena, “ Be right back” Lena nodded and returned her attention

Kara guided them down a few floors to the training room, answering their questions as she went.

“ So where is this... Fortress of Solitude?” Lexa asked.

“ Super far north. Definitely farther than Maine. I’ll fly there with

J'onn after dinner this evening.”

She glanced at Clarke, “ You could come with me,if you wished, since you can shapeshift into something that can fly. I could use another pair of eyes to search the database and while I technically could carry Dr. Scully, it would be easier to bring you along. I have to do most of it manually now, but if I have someone else there to help identify the markers we are looking for, that would save a ton of time. J'onn's coming because he's super protective of me and doesn't like me going alone since Cadmus infiltrated the fortress and took out my droid.”

Clarke glanced at Lexa who nodded, her eyes soft, “Gyon au. Ste kefa.
” *Go. Be careful .*

Clarke nodded seriously, knowing that Lexa while Lexa was fluent in english, she needed this, the ability to speak to someone in her own language. Being away from her people was difficult for her, and being away from them and leaving them in a strange place, and finding herself so firmly outside her own comfort zone was stressful for her, no matter how well she hid it.

Clarke grasped Lexa's arm, reassuring her, “Ai na komba raun” *I will return.*

“ Ai get em in.” *I know.* Lexa brushed her fingers across Clarke's knuckles, “Yu otaim dula” *You always do.*

Kara glanced at them, “ What language is that? I've never heard it before”

Clarke smiled, “Trigedasleng. Although my people call it grounder's language.”

Kara smiled, “ It sounds beautiful”

Clarke smiled at Lexa who was blushing at the compliment, “Sha, it is”

Kara pressed her palm to a panel on the wall, and ushered them through the sliding door, “ The armory is through there, grab whatever you need. We spar here, on the platform. I could set up a challenge if you'd like me to, but it sounds like you two prefer

normal hand to hand right now. I could put up some obstacles though, if you wanted to make it more interesting?"

Clarke grinned at Lexa, arching an eyebrow, before returning her attention to Kara, " We'll just do hand to hand today without any obstacles. I've never actually fought Lexa before, I have a feeling I'm gonna get my ass handed to me as it is"

Kara laughed, " Alright, I'll leave you two alone then. Have fun!" she called over her shoulder as she left the room.

Lexa was watching Clarke with a soft expression on her face, "Hanch don yu get em klin?" *How did you know?*

Clarke chuckled, " Ai get em yu in" *I know you.*

Clarke gestured to the adjacent room, " Shall we?"

Lexa smirked, " If you think you can handle me"

Clarke laughed, " I probably can't but the only way to improve is to try, or so someone tells me"

Lexa took her hand and led her into the weapons room. They stared at the assortment of high tech weapons, and Clarke could sense Lexa becoming overwhelmed again. She took the brunette's hands into her own, "Chilnes Heda." *Peace Heda*

Lexa's stormy eyes met hers and after a moment Lexa sighed, " Sha, mochof Clarke"

Clarke smiled and brushed a kiss across Lexa's knuckles before leading her to the weapons rack on the far wall. These weapons were more familiar to them both. Clarke hesitated before grabbing a knife and testing it's weight.

She smiled, " Daun nou ste foto. " *That's not bad.*

Lexa managed a small smile and followed her lead, grabbing the matching knife and twirling it in her hand. Clarke gulped nervously and Lexa grinned, "Ogud?" *ready?*

Clarke nodded, “ Ogod Heda.”

Clarke followed Lexa back to the main room and watched as Lexa jumped lightly onto the raised platform. Clarke followed her, adjusting her body to the accepted grounder fighting stance. She much preferred the grounder’s hand to hand combat training to that of Skiakru. While she had been a decent fighter in space, Skiakru struggled to adapt their fighting style to accommodate earth’s gravity. Since beginning to train with both Indra and Ortan, Clarke felt more confident in her skills, and more often than not, managed to keep her feet firmly on the ground.

Lexa watched her adjust her position with a smile, “ Os Clarke.” *Good Clarke. “ Taim na fig au hanch yu don dig au.” Time to see how much you’ve learned.*

Clarke grinned at the encouragement as Lexa watched her carefully, circling her waiting for Clarke to give her an opening. Clarke watched Lexa’s movements with a smile. Lexa reminded her of a cat, light and quick on her feet, seeming more like she was dancing than anything else.

Lexa lunged at her and Clarke easily dodged her, laughing. Lexa twirled, swinging her knife and Clarke barely got her arm up to deflect the blow in time. Lexa was fast, much faster than her. The next strike came from lower, Lexa raising her arm swiftly as if aiming for Clarke’s stomach and Clarke again barely managed to block her.

“Bochas Clarke” *Beware* , “ You have to anticipate, not react”

Clarke nodded seriously, watching Lexa move. It honestly wasn’t fair, fighting her love one on one. She was too easily distracted by Lexa’s movement’s. From the smirk on Lexa’s face, she knew precisely the effect she was having on Clarke. Clarke frowned and willed herself to focus.

Lexa paused for a moment then moved forward again, and this time, Clarke saw the blow coming. She lowered her center of gravity and leaned far enough back to avoid the blow, fall back on one hand and lash out at Lexa with her leg, kicking Lexa’s feet from under her. Lexa landed on her back and rolled swiftly back to her feet, “ Mou beda

Clarke, nodotaim.” *Better Clarke. Again.*

Clarke simply nodded, dodging another blow from Lexa and attempting one of her own, Lexa ducked, and twisted around behind Clarke, attempting a maneuver Clarke had expected from watching Lexa’s fight with Roan that had resulted in Lexa scraping the King of Azgeda’s shoulder with her sword. She sidestepped Lexa easily grinning, “You pulled that on Roan”

Lexa nodded, “ Who do you think trained him?”

Clarke studied her, “Wait, seriously?”

Lexa nodded and swung again, a swift, downward slash that Clarke narrowly avoided by jumping backwards. That was a mistake, her foot landing on the edge of the platform, and she lost her balance.

Before she went too far Lexa was there, catching her and pulling her back from the fall tugging Clarke firmly against her body, murmuring, “Bochas. You lose focus too quickly”

Clarke leaned into Lexa’s embrace and pouted, “ It’s not my fault you are so *distracting* ”

Lexa frowned seriously, “ There are many distractions in battle Clarke. Allowing yourself to be distracted can get you killed.”

Clarke leaned forward, brushing a soft kiss to Lexa’s lips, smirking when Lexa’s frown deepened before inevitably softening at the gesture, “ Ai get em in. Moba seda” *I know. I’m sorry teacher.*

Lexa blushed at being referred to as her teacher and muttered, “ Don’t let it happen again”

Clarke nodded, “ Sha seda, Ai nou na” *Yes teacher, I won’t.*

Lexa released her gently, “Want to try again?”

Clarke nodded seriously, “ Sha. Nodotaim”

They sparred for another thirty minutes, Lexa steadily alternating between complementing and correcting Clarke’s form. Clarke steadily

improved under Lexa's careful instruction and found that after a while, Lexa was unable to knock her off her feet anymore either. She still was far from Lexa's skill level and while Lexa looked like she could continue sparring for hours, Clarke was tiring out quickly.

Finally Clarke raised her hand, panting from the exertion, "Noumou."

"Tired?" Lexa asked kindly and Clarke nodded, "Sha. Ai gaf dina in"
Yes, I need food.

Lexa glanced at the clock, "Let's go change. Dinner should almost be ready"

They put the knives back where they found them and left the training room hand in hand. Lexa bumped shoulders with her and Clarke leaned into the strong brunette earning a warm smile from her and a kiss against her hair as Lexa wrapped an arm around Clarke's shoulder, "Mochof Clarke. I don't know how you knew I needed that, but I am grateful"

Clarke nodded, leaning further into Lexa as they walked, "I needed it too. I love this world, and your family. But it's going to take time to get used to being here. I miss Polis too, and have been craving my lessons"

Lexa nodded, "You really have improved. One day soon...It will be you teaching me"

Clarke laughed, "I highly doubt that"

Clarke enjoyed Lexa's closeness as they headed to their shared room. Lexa grabbed a change of clothes and glanced at their shared bathroom, clearing her throat nervously, "Do you want to go first?"

Clarke caught the flush in Lexa's cheeks and approached her lightly, "Or... you could join me?" Clarke wasn't ready to be separated from Lexa yet. They hadn't had any time to themselves since that first time together just before Lexa had been shot. They had been caught up in the whirlwind of disaster after disaster since, and Clarke wanted to enjoy the peace while they still had it. From the shy way Lexa was regarding her, Lexa felt the same.

Clarke took her hand and kissed Lexa's palm, enjoying the way Lexa shivered, " It's just a shower Lexa. If you aren't comfortable with that, it's okay.."

" No.. I want to. I just... There's not enough time to do anything but a quick shower."

Clarke smiled at the longing in Lexa's voice and nodded, " I can behave myself if you can"

Lexa laughed, " That's just it, I'm not sure I can be that close to you and keep my hands to myself"

Clarke grinned and kissed Lexa gently,"Rain check then. Do you know how to use the shower?"

Lexa smirked, " I'm sure I can figure it out"

Clarke smirked and gestured to the bathroom, " After you then. I need to dig out something to wear anyway"

Lexa nodded and hesitated, and Clarke tugged her into another insistent kiss, " Go, before I change my mind and we end up being late to dinner"

Lexa nodded, heading into the bathroom. Clarke waited until the door clicked shut behind her and let out a sigh, trying to stamp down the feelings Lexa had drawn to the surface. *Tonight* . She promised herself, *when I get back from the fortress with Kara*.

She dug out some clothes from the suitcase that had been brought to their room. She sat on the bed lost in thought until a soft knock on the door shook her from her reverie. She opened the door to find Regina smiling at her, " Hey. Dinner is ready when you to are able to join us."

Clarke nodded, " We'll be there soon. Lexa's in the shower. I just need a quick one as well and we will be right there. Where are we going?"

" They gave us a room just off of the cafeteria. Apparently it was the only space big enough for all of us"

Clarke chuckled, “Okay, and that’s down the hall right?”

“ Yes” Regina evaluated her for a moment, “ Are you alright dear? I know this is a lot.”

Clarke nodded, “ It’s an adjustment, and being away from our people isn’t easy for either of us... but.. We are okay”

Regina opened her arms and Clarke accepted the hug with a smile as Regina pressed a kiss to Clarke’s hair, “ I wish we didn’t have to uproot you. I’m sorry we couldn’t find another way”

Clarke shook her head firmly, “ It was not your fault. That realm was unstable at best, and at worst, extremely dangerous. But it was home. We will adjust. It’s just going to take time.”

Regina nodded, “ Did your training session go well?”

Clarke heard the bathroom door open and Lexa answered, “ She’s come a long way. Heya nomi.” *Hello mother.*

“ Heya Lexa” Regina returned with a smile, “ Well, I will leave you two to change. Join us when you are ready.”

Clarke showered quickly and Lexa took her hand eagerly as they headed down the hall to the cafeteria, humming her appreciation for Clarke’s outfit, “ You look amazing Clarke”

Clarke blushed, “ Mochof”

Lexa grinned, “ If I didn’t know better, I’d think you prefer Trigedasleng”

Clarke nodded seriously, “ I do. It feels like something that’s ours, you know? Though.. I get frustrated sometimes because I can’t always say what I want to in trigedasleng. It can be rather... limiting at times”

Lexa nodded, “ It’s a language of necessity, for a culture that encourages people to speak when it’s truly necessary. My people are a people of fewer words. We value showing our intentions rather than speaking them”

Clarke nodded, “ It’s why I identify with Trikru more than I ever have with my own people”

Lexa smiled warmly, “ Well I feel honored that you have chosen my people.”

Clarke smirked, “ Ai na sad Klin yu otaim. ” *I will always choose you.*

Lexa flushed and Clarke grinned, “and sometimes the only way to express it effectively is in Trigedasleng”

“Why?” Lexa asked though Clarke suspected she already knew the answer.

“Because from what I’ve learned, Trigedasleng emphasizes that your word is your bond. So it means more, when I say it in your language than in mine. It just feels like it gives the words that much more weight and meaning”

“ It does” Lexa assured her, tugging Clarke in for another kiss.

Clarke chuckled and pushed her away gently after a moment, “ We are late already, and if you keep that up, we’ll miss dinner entirely”

Lexa pouted and Clarke squeezed her hand, leading her the last few yards to the cafeteria. Several DEO agents glanced up and pointed them to the room off to the left. Clarke held open the door for Lexa, bowing as she whipped the door open with a flourish, “ Pas yu Heda” *After you Commander.*

Lexa blushed and Clarke could hear her family chuckling at her antics. She swiftly found her seat between Lexa and Kara.

“Glad you could make it,” Kara tease dand Clarke smirked at her, “ Sorry, someone kept distracting me”

Kara grinned at them both, and passed the plate covered in fresh steaks, “ Here. Eat up. You are going to need your energy tonight, it’s a long flight”

Clarke nodded and filled her plate as the family passed the dishes around. She dug into her mashed potatoes hungrily and moaned, “

Oh my god, who made this?"

Emma pointed her fork at Regina, " Regina and Z made everything except for the steaks, I made those"

"It's incredible" Lexa agreed, digging into her own plate.

For awhile everyone ate and joked with each other. It was fairly clear to Clarke that everyone needed the welcome distraction from the dire situation outside, as no one seemed willing to mention it. Lena fired questions at her mother, trying to learn everything she could about their time apart, and get to know her mother better. Kara questioned Maleficent, Lily and Ruby on their abilities. Zelena was answering Lexa and Raven's questions about magic. Clarke glanced at Regina and Emma who seemed content to watch and listen. Clarke grinned at the joy in both women's eyes as they watched everyone interact. Alex was talking softly with Abby, and Raven and Winn seemed lost in their own little bubble, eagerly discussing various forms of technology. Clarke smirked as she observed the pair. Lexa leaned over and whispered, "She seems happy doesn't she?"

Clarke nodded, " I haven't seen her smile like that in a long time"

Maggie nudged Lexa, " What are we whispering about?"

Clarke laughed, " Raven... She seems smitten"

Maggie watched them interact and grinned, " Winn's a great guy. A real sweetheart."

Clarke nodded, " I got that sense"

Lexa was watching Winn with narrowed eyes and Clarke nudged her chuckling, " Easy killer, if I didn't know better I'd say you were a little protective of your sister"

" She's family. It's my duty to look after her" Lexa stated seriously.

Clarke nodded, " I know, but Raven's a big girl and used to caring for herself"

Lexa sighed, " I know. I still can't help feeling responsible, especially

after all the bad history between us”

They finished their dinner quietly, listening to all the conversations around them. Kara eventually glanced at the clock and sighed, “ It’s time”

Clarke nodded and pushed her chair back, “ I’m ready. Is there anything I need to bring?”

“ All the supplies are already downstairs waiting. “

Kara glanced at Lexa, “ As long as everything goes according to plan, I’ll have your girl back by midnight”

Lexa nodded, “ Thank you. Keep her safe”

Kara agreed, her tone betraying how seriously she took that responsibility, “ I will.”

Clarke let Lexa tug her into a possessive kiss, groaning when Lexa swiped her tongue across her bottom lip. Lexa wrapped her arms around Clarke and held her close for a long moment whispering, “ Gouthru klir hashta yu soujon . hos raun bak ai op” *Safe passage on your travels.*

Hurry back to me.

“Sha Heda. Mebi oso na hit choda op nodotaim.” *May we meet again.*

Lexa hung on for a moment longer and Clarke reassured her, “ En’s ku, you. Ai swega yu. Chilnes Leksa, Nou fir raun” *It’s alright, I swear to you. Peace Lexa, Have no fear.*

Lexa relaxed slowly and released Clarke. Kara nodded to Lexa, “ she’ll be back in one peace. I swear”

Lexa nodded and squeezed Clarke’s hand, “ Ai hod yu in FisHeda” *I love you, commander of healing.*

Clarke flushed, “ Ai hod yu in seintaim Heda” *I love you too Commander.*

She turned and headed down the stairs, following Kara. her mother tossed a warning to be careful at her over the railing and Clarke nodded, “ I will. Keep an eye on Lexa for me?”

Abby nodded, “Of course. I won't let her out of my sight until you return”

Clarke relaxed, she knew Lexa's family would protect her, but Clarke still felt better knowing that her own mother would be close by to defend Lexa from any threats. She had after all torn the last man to threaten Lexa's life to shreds.

Kara took a deep breath and nodded to her two companions. Lena approached quietly and asked, “ Is it... too late for me to tag along?”

Monica was watching nervously from the side and Kara glanced at the woman whose eyes pleaded not to let Lena go. Kara sighed, torn between the two. Clarke stepped in gently, her tone soft, “ Dr. Scully would prefer you stay here, where she can keep an eye on you, in case anything were to happen.” The words cancer didn't need to be mentioned, it hung like a heavy cloud over them all. Lena sighed, “ It's just.. I could be useful...”

Clarke understood the need to stay busy while the person you loved put themselves in harm's way, the need to help, however you can. She furrowed her brow as she turned to Kara, “ The DEO has technology to allow people to communicate via cameras, Regina said she was using it earlier?”

J'onn nodded and smiled knowing what Clarke was about to suggest, “excellent idea Clarke.”

He turned to Monica, “ could you set up the conference room, that way Lena, Abby and Dr. Scully can confer with us while we look at the files? Have Alex link our coms to the mainframe”

Monica nodded, relief evident in her eyes.

Lena still looked disappointed but accepted the compromise. She glanced at Kara, “ Be careful, okay. Don't take unnecessary risks”

Kara laughed, “ I'm nearly invincible, taking risks is my job”

“ Nearly Kara. you can be hurt. Just... Promise me?” Clarke noticed the hint of fear in Lena’s voice and one glance at Kara confirmed she heard it too.

Kara nodded, “ Okay, if it means that much to you, I will be careful”

Lena blushed and murmured, “Thank you, it does”.

Kara let Lena tug her into a hug and after a moment Kara gently untangled herself from Lena’s arms and cleared her throat, “ Okay, let’s do this. The sooner we go, the sooner we get home.”

Clarke nodded and ducked into the room Kara directed her to, “ Join us when you’re ready”

Clarke nodded and ducked inside. She hesitated and decided to shift into a griffin for now, and decided she would become a dragon when they were in the air. She had shifted midair during Lena’s rescue and while it was still nerve wracking to do so, she knew she could do it safely. She would be able to keep up better in dragon form, and she didn’t want to slow them down, especially since she still desperately wanted to spend some time in Lexa’s arms later.

She undressed for the third time that day and let the shift take over. It still made her fatigued to do so since coming to this realm. The shift took a little longer than it had earlier since she was still tired from her sparring match with Lexa.

Finally she emerged, and Kara grinned, “Nice.”

Clarke reached out to Kara and watched the girl jump a bit when she stated, *Let’s get moving.*

J’onn nodded smiling, “ Let’s” He gestured to the open balcony and Clarke bounded up to the balcony and cast the spell that made her appear as nothing more than a shadow to the people below. She shifted swiftly into a dragon, feeling her powerful wings catch air as Kara and J’onn sped by her.

Smirking she took off after them, determined to not let them outrun her.

13. Legendary Lesbian Commander

Notes for the Chapter:

First off: I am SOOO sorry for the lengthy delay. as many of you may have guessed from my comments in the last chapter, I have been super sick. Like, can't stand to be in the same room as an electronic device cuz it hurts too much, sick. so this took way longer as a result.

second: LOTS of Fluff ahead. more clexa, and a bit of light angst as people have a few moments of downtime to deal with relationship issues, but like I said, its light. way more fluff than angst.

third: the science for this story is complicated, and I will be the first to admit that while I love astronomy and earth science, and am okay at it, I am not the supernerd Lena Luthor is, so if I screwed something up, forgive me. I did do some research for this so hopefully it wont be too bad, but again, writing while sick sucks.

Lastly: If it takes me a bit to get the next chapter up, bear with me. I am not abandoning this story, I promise. but I am having some rather... scary health issues at the moment and I need to take care of myself first. so chapters will be posted as I am able. as it stands right now, I have to go back to primary care tomorrow and hopefully walk out with a referral to a cardiologist.

P.S. enjoy the super long, light angst, mostly fluff and a bit of crackfic that is this chapter. as always, Comments are the surest way to keep me going. love you guys and oh, btw... Happy PRIDE!!!!

Lexa watched Clarke fly away, her heart clenching anxiously. Glancing at Lena beside her, she saw the same fear in the brunette's pale green eyes.

Lena sought reassurance from Lexa, " They'll be okay, right?"

Lexa nodded, adopting a reassuring smile, understanding perfectly Lena's unspoken fears. Lexa watched Monica approach her daughter cautiously, gently trying to tug her daughter into a comforting hug. Lena shrugged her mother's touch off and walked away stiffly, and Lexa watched the sadness in Monica's eyes grow.

Lexa gave her a nod, "Let me talk to her"

Lexa followed Lena back to the lab, where she moved vials around listlessly. Lexa stood quietly observing the woman. After a few moments of Lena slamming vials around she approached lightly and took the vial currently in Lena's hand from her, startling Lena. Lena swung at her, and Lexa ducked out of harm's way easily, grabbing the woman's hands as she lost herself to fear.

Lexa held her hands firmly and commanded, " Detener. Lena, cálmate" *Stop, Lena, calm down.*

Lena froze and stared at her hands, apologizing profusely, " Lo siento. Entré en pánico" *I'm sorry, I panicked.*

Lexa released her hands gently her eyes locked with Lena's, " Que es mi culpa. Te sorprendí" *It's my fault, I startled you"*

Lena sighed, rubbing her wrists, " You're stronger than you look"

Lexa nodded with a grimace, " Here, let me"

She took the woman's wrists in her own and focused, her eyes fluttering closed as she accessed her magic. It was still an odd sensation for her, pinning down the fire in her veins, and harnessing it to her will. After a moment she let go again and reached for the counter to steady herself as Lena stared at her, mouth agape. Lexa fought back the exhaustion as Lena watched her.

" That was... intense" the brunette commented before placing a hand on Lexa's shoulder, " You alright?"

Lexa nodded, " I will be fine. How are you?"

Lena nodded gratefully, "Better. I just... I didn't hear you come up behind me and I thought"

“ you thought I was another kidnapper”

Lena nodded, “yes. I’m sorry. I hope I didn’t hurt you”

Lexa smirked, “ It takes a bit more than one scared young woman to take me down, even if that woman is a Luthor”

Lena smiled and hesitated, “ How many languages do you know?”

Lexa sighed, “ Three. Trigedasleng is my first language but I am fluent in English and Spanish as well”

“How did you know to use Spanish with me?”

Lexa arched an eyebrow, “ I’m not sure, instinct?”

Lena nodded, considering Lexa’s words thoughtfully. Lexa watched her.

Lena’s hands twisted nervously and Lexa sighed, “Do you know how to meditate?”

Lena shook her head, “ I... try, but my mind is never quiet enough”

Lexa nodded thoughtfully. She certainly understood the struggle of calming one’s mind enough to meditate properly. She nodded her head to the center of the room, “ Come with me. I wish to try something I think may help”

Lena gave her an odd look but complied.

Lexa lowered herself gracefully to the ground where she had meditated earlier and gestured for Lena to do the same as she crossed her legs and straightened her back.

Lexa watched the woman awkwardly work her way to the floor, grimacing once she was seated, “ This isn’t... sanitary”

Lexa laughed, “ You would have hated my tower in Polis then, as advanced as we were, sanitation was hardly our primary concern, even after skiakru taught us their ways”

Lena nodded, clearly preparing to ask about Polis but Lexa redirected the conversation back to the task at hand and gestured to Lena's posture, " Cross your legs, straighten you back, let your hands rest loosely on your knees, palms up"

Lena nodded and followed Lexa's instructions. Lexa nodded, "Good. Now... Breathe slowly in through your nose hold it for two seconds and release that breath as slowly as you drew it in"

Lena tried and Lexa nearly laughed at Lena's gasp for air, " Slowly Lena, you are not drowning. Here, match me"

Lexa closed her eyes and inhaled slowly, allowing her diaphragm to expand. She held the breath for a few seconds and released the breath slowly. She felt her magic respond to her immediately, calming and slowly energizing her. Letting her eyes open she saw Lena watching her carefully.

" Now you try"

Lena nodded and tried again and Lexa breathed with her. It took a few tries but Lena eventually found a rhythm that worked for her and Lexa nodded encouragingly. " Good. Now. I am going to give you a few words. As you practice your breathing, I want you to focus on these three words. Memorize them, focus all of your attention on them. Can you handle that?"

Lena nodded seriously and Lexa softened her tone, "Say it after me, while maintaining your breathing and posture. Ready?"

Lena nodded her agreement and Lexa softly began to chant, "Noun, fiyanes, en uf"

Lena frowned and lost focus almost immediately, " What?"

Lexa chided her gently, "Focus"

Lena shook her head, "Sorry. Okay. What was that, what you just said?"

"Noun, fiyanes, en uf"

Lexa smirked as Lena tried to mimic Lexa's words before sighing, "What does that mean?"

"Wisdom, Compassion and Strength in my native tongue. They are the three most important traits for a leader to possess. We learn to meditate on those words from the moment we begin our training"

Lena nodded and attempted to say it, "Noun, Fee-anes, in of?"

Lexa chuckled as she shook her head, "No. Listen to me say it a few more times. Really hear the words. And don't stop your breathing exercise while you do it."

Lena nodded and brought her breathing back under control and Lexa stated it again, "Noun, fiyanes, en uf. Noun, fiyanes, en uf. Noun, fiyanes, en uf"

Lexa nodded to the brunette across from her and Lena picked up the chant, still stumbling over the words, but improving rapidly as she recited the words with Lexa. Eventually Lexa let Lena chant alone as she watched her quietly and smiled as Lena's eyes naturally closed of their own accord and her voice became softer until she was not speaking anymore. Her breathing became slower, and the stiffness in Lena's shoulders relaxed slowly. Soon, not only her posture mirrored Lexa, but Lena mirrored her calm as well.

After watching the brunette carefully for a few more moments, Lexa allowed herself to relax as well, and slipped back into her own meditation. The room was silent for a long time as they sat across from each other. Lexa's senses were always more alert when she was focused inward. Clarke found her constant calm unnerving at times but for Lexa, it was a necessity. A calm mind made better decisions. She could not afford to be ruled by her emotions, and this was the surest way to bring herself back into balance and find perspective on her situation. Lately, with everything in her life off kilter, Lexa craved these moments of peace more than she ever had before.

Stilling her own mind was proving to be quite the challenge lately. She craved the familiarity of her rooms in the tower. She missed the scent of grass in the air as a soft cool breeze rustled the curtains that separated the balcony from her rooms. She craved the sounds of the

crackling fire, the rough texture of the tower floor beneath her bare feet. She missed the warm furs that covered her at night as she lay in her own bed. She missed falling asleep to the soft voices of her guards as they patrolled the halls with heavy steps. She missed her lessons with the natblida, their young faces eager to please their heda. She missed the familiar tongue of her people. And more than anything, she missed the familiarity of the commanders whispering to her.

She missed their presence in her mind and their influence. It was easy to not overthink her decisions when there was a chorus of voices contributing to the decisions. She had thought her mind would be quieter without them, and at first, it was, making their absence acutely felt. But now, now her own voice had grown louder in their absence, and her calm was often lost. She felt like a ship on the violent seas, yanked one way and then another by the wind, tossed around by the angry waves. The longer she was separated from her people, the louder the voice of her own fear became in her mind.

Lexa felt herself slipping into panic as her mind once again drew attention to the fact that her own voice was the only one she heard now and felt her magic responding to her stress. Clarke's words came back to her, the firmness of her tone immediately calming Lexa's mind, "*Chilnes Leksa, Nou fir raun*" *Peace Lexa, have no fear.*

Her mind stilled and Lexa abandoned her usual meditation tactic and decided to meditate on those words instead, allowing her mind to recall Clarke's voice with perfect clarity, soothing her anxiety. The effect Clarke had on her puzzled her to no end. On the one hand, she challenged Lexa, constantly. She never backed down when she believed she was right. There was a self assuredness that Lexa had found fascinating from the moment they met. Lexa's own confidence had come from her ability to hear the commanders. When that was robbed from her, Lexa had felt like a ship with no anchor, adrift on the waves, completely at the mercy of everything life tossed at her. Despite her ability to mask her turbulent emotions, Clarke always sensed her struggle and seemed to intuitively know how to silence Lexa's internal war.

The training session earlier had done much to calm Lexa's anxious mind until Clarke left for the fortress. Now, without the steady calm

Clarke seemed to create in the people around her, her fears had begun to get the better of her.

Kara and Lena seemed to have a similar relationship in that way. Kara was a strong calming presence, and when she was near, Lena seemed to feel secure, bold, and brave. But the moment Lena was without the blonde hero's presence, she struggled and her insecurities completely took over. Lexa hoped this meditation technique would help Lena maintain her cool regardless of whether Kara was around. She knew Monica ached to reach out to her daughter, but Lena's fear of abandonment was stronger than her desire to reconnect with her mother so the task fell to someone without a close emotional tie to the young anxious CEO.

Lexa understood that, probably more than Lena, or anyone in her family for that matter realized. But Lena was not easy to get to know. She was closed off, erecting walls thinking it would protect her fragile heart. The problem was, it wasn't hard to see how lonely Lena was, even with her guard up. She hoped that over time, Lena would continue to trust Lexa and allow her to help her, the way Clarke had helped Lexa. Lexa sensed a familiar spirit in Lena and hoped that they could become friends. For her part, despite her own insecurities of late, she was trying.

Lexa sighed, and refocused. She had allowed her mind to wander from her task, and while contemplation was helpful during meditation, her focus needed to be on helping herself and Lena relax and center themselves so they could assist and support their loved ones.

Lexa allowed them both to meditate for an hour longer before she sensed her mother seeking her out. She could sense Regina's magic seeking her out and she smiled momentarily in recognition of the warmth Regina's magic brought. Regina was on her way to the lab, and knowing that startling Lena would undo all the calm she had found, Lexa pulled herself out of her meditative state slowly, blinking rapidly as her eyes readjusted to the harsh lights of the laboratory. She gave herself a minute to become fully present in her current environment while maintaining the peace meditation had brought.

When she felt grounded enough, she spoke, keeping her voice

intentionally soft and gentle, “Keep breathing exactly the same, but slowly allow your focus to turn to your surroundings. When you are ready, open your eyes.”

Lexa watched her carefully and nodded in satisfaction when pale green eyes met hers, noticeably calmer. Lena’s breathing remained deep and even and Lexa coaxed her to slowly allow her breathing to return to normal.

After a few moments, Lena smiled, “ Wow. That was...”

Lexa arched a brow, “ Feeling better?”

Lena nodded, “Much. Thank you. I needed that”

Lexa nodded firmly, “ Whenever you feel yourself losing your calm, recite those words, and focus your breathing until you have it under control. It will ground you, and help you keep your perspective”

Lena nodded gratefully and stretched her muscles, “ I feel... more energized. I thought it would put me to sleep, but instead, I feel, more in control, more... aware”

Lexa stood to her feet and offered Lena her hand. Lena accepted it gratefully, and brushed herself off once her feet were firmly planted on the ground.

Regina appeared outside the glass door and entered the room quietly.

Lexa smirked at the older woman, “ Right on cue”

Regina tilted her head, “ You expected me?”

Lexa nodded, “ I sensed you looking for us.”

Lena gave her an odd look, “ You didn’t say anything”

“ Didn’t need to. You were back in the present before she arrived.”

Lena caught on and flashed Lexa a grateful smile before returning her attention to Regina who watched them both with a smile, “They are at the fortress and Kara is asking for your expertise”

Lena nodded, her focus returning firmly to the task at hand as she followed Regina to the conference room.

Lexa lagged behind and her mother hesitated outside the conference room, “ Lexa, a moment?”

Lexa nodded and stepped off to the side, and found herself slipping into the familiar pose she had adopted as commander. Regina watched her daughter for a moment with a frown.

“ What’s wrong dear?”

Lexa shook her head and Regina protested, “ Something is bothering you.”

Lexa swallowed, “ I’m alright mother”

Regina flinched at the formality and Lexa cursed herself mentally.

Lexa took her mother’s hand, “Bi moba.”

Sighing in frustration with herself she started to switch to english but Regina seemed relieved to have somewhere to start. Lexa watched a flurry of emotions cross Regina’s features as she chose her words carefully. She held up her hand when Lexa started to apologize again, easily switching to trigedasleng, “Chek ai au, Leksa. Ron ai ridiyo op. Tel ai, Chit’s gon daun?” *Look at me Lexa, speak true. Tell me, what’s wrong?*

Lexa felt immensely guilty for worrying her mother. She was trying so hard to be strong. Their friends needed them, and she was still struggling with her homesickness and restlessness. She felt weak.

Regina waited patiently for a long moment before sighing, “ I miss it your land too Lexa. I.. was actually looking forward to staying in Polis, as a family. I know that may seem odd to you, but when I was there... even without my memories of our time there, I honestly felt I was home. Far more at home then I ever was in Storybrooke or the enchanted forest. I was free of people’s expectations of me there, I never felt like I had to play a role, or be anyone other than I am. Your people embraced us, and Emma and I both were excited at the prospect of rebuilding our family there, with you. It breaks my heart

that it was torn from us, from you, and your people.”

Lexa’s eyes watered in relief that her mother seemed to understand her grief and Regina offered a hug in that gentle way of hers. Lexa hesitated, grateful that Regina never forced affection on her, but always respected her adult daughter’s boundaries. Lexa stepped forward and let her mother wrap her arms around her and blushed from embarrassment when the older brunette placed an affectionate kiss in her hair, “ Sen ai op. Yu laik gona. Yu laik yuj . Ai hod yu in Heda Leksa, Heda kom Thotin Krugeda” *Listen to me. You are a warrior. You are strong. I love you Lexa, Commander of the Thirteen Clans.*

Lexa glanced up at her mother, grateful for the fact that her mother addressed her using the familiar title in her own tongue, “ You were struggling with the language... how’d you get so good at it again?”

Regina shrugged, “ My memories returned, and with it, it seems my grasp of the language returned as well. If it helps, I will use it more often Lexa, whatever you need. I am here to support you. You can lean on me, it’s not weakness”

Lexa frowned, puzzled by her brunette mother's ability to accurately pinpoint what Lexa was dealing with. She remembered Emma telling her how similar she was to Regina back in Polis when they first arrived and she sighed knowing her mother would understand her struggle if she could find the strength to share it with her, “ It is though. I am supposed to be strong, for my people, for my family, for Clarke...and without the commanders to help me, I just feel... lost.”

Regina shook her head, “ I know you are used to carrying the burden of your people alone. And I know it will take time to trust us enough to let us carry some of the weight, but in the meantime, please, if you need something. Ask. Don’t struggle alone. Trust is not weakness, trust makes you stronger.”

Regina hesitated and then continued, “ And you don’t need the commanders Lexa. You never did. You have your own strength. It may take time, but you will find that strength. I see it in you, Clarke sees it in you. Everyone here sees it. Given time, you will see it too.”

Lexa nodded and let her mother play with her hair for a moment longer while she relaxed into the strong motherly hug. She sighed, “Mochof Nomon” *Thank you mother*

Regina smiled, “ Pro, Leksa” *You’re welcome Lexa.*

Lexa pulled out of her mother’s grasp and started to head for the door but Regina hesitated and Lexa caught the grief in her mother’s eyes before Regina was able to hide it, “ Nomon, chit’s gon daun?” *Mother, what’s wrong?*

Regina gave her daughter an apologetic smile, “ I simply wished to say that I am sorry. My first instinct is to call you by your full name and while I am trying to correct that, I know it bothers you when I slip up. I need you to know I am trying to do better because I know you don’t care for my using your full name. I am trying... I truly am, to honor your wishes, but it takes getting used to.”

Lexa nodded and Regina reached out for her, taking her daughter’s hand gently, “ Perhaps if... I understood why? It would help me.”

Regina seemed hesitant and apologetic, and Lexa sighed heavily, “ It’s just not... *me* nomon.”

Regina briefly smiled at the affection in Lexa’s tone as she squeezed Lexa’s hand, “ Why do you prefer Lexa? I know there’s more to it then simply disliking the name strikon”

Lexa blushed and sighed. She didn’t want to hurt her mother’s feelings, but she despised being called Alexandria. Regina pleaded, “ Please tell me, I want to know. It’s hard for me to understand, but I want to do better. I can’t fix it if I don’t understand”

Lena nodded, “ I’m not Alexandria. I haven’t been *her* for a very long time. I don’t know who Alexandria is anymore. Maybe I did, once upon a time, but the little Alexandria you knew is gone. She vanished when I was taken and trained as *natblida* .”

Regina nodded, her eyes asking Lexa to continue and Lexa continued, fresh tears sliding down her cheeks, “ I don’t know. It’s just.. Everytime I hear you call me by that name, I feel like you keep

expecting that version of me to return, and... I'm sorry *nomon* , but she never will. I'm not that person anymore. I can't be her, I wish I could..."

Regina was crying as well, and she once again opened her arms to her daughter, " *Darling* , No." The emotion in her mother's voice caught her off guard, " I know you've grown up and changed. And I am so sorry that I made you feel you had to be someone you are not. I know the pain of not living up to your parent's expectations and I never want to do that to my children. Please believe me when I say that I don't want you to change for me, or anyone for that matter, and as much as I am heartbroken that I missed out on seeing you grow up, I never expected that from you."

Regina pulled back for a moment and lifted Lexa's chin until her gaze met her mother's, " I want you to be *you* Lexa. I want to get to know who you are *now* . I am so proud of the beautiful strong woman you've become. I may miss her dearly, but I don't want to know little Alexandria anymore. I want to know my daughter, whoever she is, whatever name she decides to go by, whatever language she wants to use, whoever she loves. Neither of us can change the past, and honestly, if I could, I am not sure I would. I want to be here for you *now* , I want to know *this* version of you. And I am so sorry if I made you feel that you would not be accepted unless you were *her* ."

Lexa cried openly, clinging to her mother, relieved to have her fears in the open, and have her mother's assurance that she was accepted and loved. She relaxed into her mother's embrace and for the first time, really let her mother hold her. She had no desire to pull away and hide anymore, she didn't need to. She felt safe there in Regina's arms.

Her mother held her for several moments and eventually Emma joined them, " Chit kom daun au?" *what's happened?*

Lexa heard the concern in Emma's tone and glanced up to see green eyes peering worriedly at them both, " Are you okay Lexa?"

Lexa nodded, " Ai laik nau nomon" *I am now mother*

Emma studied them both for a moment longer and decided they were

telling the truth, “ Clarke and the others are on their way home. They found what they were looking for. She should be back by eleven.”

She paused, “ Lena seems to be feeling more herself, Thank you Lexa.”

Lexa nodded and her blonde mother surprised her by tugging both Regina and Lexa into her arms protectively, “ Are you sure everything’s alright? You both seem... sad”

“As do you dear” Regina pointed out gently and Emma nodded, “ I am. I miss our family. I don’t like being this far away. I...”

Lea caught the look that flickered across her mother's face and recognized it instantly. Emma sensed danger. Her ability to sense trouble since she became the Dark One was stronger than it had been before.

Lexa glanced at Regina, who stiffened once she caught the look as well, “ Emma, what is it?”

Emma shook her head, “ Probably nothing, I just... have a feeling”

Lexa nodded, “ Things are about to get worse, aren’t there?”

Emma frowned, “ Not if I can help it”

“ What’s wrong Emma?” Regina asked, her tone low.

“ It’s something Monica said about CSM. About the extent of his injuries when she first found him, about his recovery and his inability to die”

Lexa knew where Emma was going with her line of thought before Regina did, “ Who would do that?”

“Do what?” Regina demanded and Lexa pulled out of her mother's tightening grip. She knew Regina wasn’t tightening her hold intentionally but was reacting protectively out of fear.

Emma shook her head, “ I only know of two people who even had the capability and I definitely didn’t help that bastard.”

Lexa's ability to know what Emma was thinking before Regina did was clearly frustrating her brunette mother, "Emma, what is going on? What are you talking about?"

Emma sighed, " Killian"

Regina flinched, " What about him?"

Lexa watched her brunette mother's jaw clench angrily at the mention of the pirate and former Dark One and gently coaxed her mother to calm down, " Nomon, sen ai em" *mother, listen to her*

Regina nodded stiffly, "Explain."

Emma ran her fingers through her hair anxiously, " I won't know until I ask Killian, but I suspect CSM survived his injuries all those years ago with the help of magic. Dark magic. Magic was hardly accessible in this realm back then. Killian and I were the only wielders of magic that we knew of in this realm back then. Like I said, I didn't heal that bastard. But Killian? He hated me and was determined to make my life a living hell. He did absolutely everything he could to undo any good I did. So it's entirely possible that he healed CSM"

"Of course that pirate had something to do with this" Regina growled and Emma sighed, " That's not all I'm afraid. I... suspect he made a deal with the Dark One, for protection. I think. That protection may still be in place, though the deal he made with Killian is no longer held by Killian, but by the current Dark One."

Regina went white and Lexa placed a steadying arm at her mother's elbow as she ground out, "Gold." Regina looked terrified, " Emma, we left Henry there, with Gold as the only magic user in Storybrooke"

Emma nodded, " I know. I'm on my way to speak with my parents. There's more though"

Regina sighed, " Of course there is. Because nothing can ever be simple."

Emma looked like she wanted to scream in frustration as well,

“Clarke said she sensed magic in the Fortress. Someone else has been there, and accessed Kara’s records. She’s never met Gold, so she can’t tell whose magic it was but it was definitely dark.”

Regina gripped Emma’s arm in fear, “ What do we do? We can’t leave yet, but we can’t leave Henry there alone”

“ He won’t be alone dear” Maleficent spoke calmly as she approached, “ Lily, Ruby and I are flying back now. As soon as she heard what was going on, Cat Grant immediately offered her plane’s services. Both Lily and I will be able to guide the plane in and out of Storybrooke safely and your son will be just fine, I swear it”

Regina relaxed marginally, “ You will protect him?”

“ Of course dear. You both helped find and protect my daughter, I am simply returning the favor. And I still owe Gold payback for betraying me, twice”

Regina was still anxious and Mal took her hand, “ I won’t let Henry out of sight, you have my solemn vow that he will be safe, and with me or Lily at all times Regina”

Regina’s eyes filled with tears and she nodded, unable to speak. Emma spoke for her, “ Thank you Mal. I can’t tell you how much it helps to know you will watch over him in our absence”

Regina allowed Mal to give her a brief hug.

Lexa watched the two women interact with interest, her eyebrow arching into her hairline as she glanced at Emma who smirked at her, apparently sensing the question Lexa was afraid to ask.

Mal squeezed Emma’s arm, “ We will see you all home soon. Be careful.”

Emma nodded and Regina sidled closer to her daughter and wrapped an arm around Lexa’s shoulder. Lexa leaned into her mother, sensing that she needed to know her children were close, and safe. “Chilnes nomon, everything will be fine”

Regina nodded, “ I know, I just can’t help but worry”

Lexa let Regina hold her for a moment longer before leaving her two mothers to talk privately. She wandered around for several minutes before finally finding Raven and Winn hard at work programming the rockets. Raven glanced up and gave her a tired smile when she entered, “ You heard?”

Lexa nodded and Winn glanced up, “ Hey, it’s the twin! Are you a science genius as well?”

Lexa shook her head with a light smile, “ No. I’m the genius battle strategist”

Winn grinned, “ Really?” he hadn't noticed the way Raven’s eyes had darkened and Lexa gave her a sad apologetic smile.

Raven seemed to shake herself loose of the dark memories and elbowed Winn. He nodded and hit a bunch of keys rapidly, and they watched the screen carefully. Lexa nodded, “ What is that?”

“A simulation. We are still trying to figure out how to get the rockets high enough in the atmosphere to do get the right amount of solar radiation. This plan... isn’t ideal. There’s so many variables to contend with.” Winn stated with a sigh.

Winn watched the screen carefully, occasionally hitting a key or two to make minor adjustments. Lexa watched them work, smirking at the wistful expression on her twin’s face. Raven caught the smirk and gave Lexa a light shove, “ What?”

Lexa shook her head, “Nothing”

Raven narrowed her eyes, “ Why don’t I believe you?”

“ Really it’s nothing. It’s just... you in your element, it’s impressive, you seem, free, and happy”

“Wow, is the legendary Heda of the thirteen clans actually complimenting me?”

Lexa laughed, “ I’m trying to. You don’t take them very well”

“ I do actually, it’s just a little odd coming from you, you know, with

torturing me, killing my boyfriend, oh and let's not forget, being the reason my leg ended up the fucked up mess it is and generally being a major pain in my ass"

Lexa sighed, " First of all, I didn't make you blow up that bridge, you decided that on your own. Second, our people hurt each other, a lot before we became allies. I had no reason to believe you were my long lost sister Raven. If I had, I never would have let any harm come to you. I'm sorry Raven. What do I need to do to fix it and get along with you?"

"Just give me time. Unlike Clarke, I'm not in love with you, so forgiving you is going to take time. I'm trying too though, just so you know"

Lexa nodded and glanced at Winn who seemed torn between continuing to stare at them and interrupt. She arched her brow and he grinned sheepishly, " Are we done? Because as fascinating..." He glances at Lexa who is giving a hard look and he gulps nervously, " and terrifying as your family drama is, I think we figured it out. I have to run this one more time to be sure, but if everything pans out, We can launch as early as tomorrow morning."

" and we are sure this will work, without killing more people?"

Raven nodded, " We are keeping it well under the one sievert limit. As long as the total amount of solar radiation any single person on the planet is exposed to, we will have kept the risk of fatal cancers and other conditions caused by solar radiation to a minimum"

Lexa frowned at the flurry of unfamiliar terms and Lena chuckled as she entered and spotted Lexa's confusion, "Sievert is a unit of measurement Lexa that measures the amount of solar radiation something is exposed to. and all you need to understand is that we have calculated that it will take approximately an hour and a half to create a hole in the ozone layer wide enough to create the minimum amount of solar radiation needed to irradiate the planet and promptly close it. The reason this particular solution is so complex is largely because radiation won't distribute evenly across the atmosphere or the planet, in large part due to the magnetic field that protects us from the majority of solar radiation. So we have to create

a hole large enough to give everyone the minimum dose, while ensuring that at the same time, that we don't damage our own magnetic field and that no one on the planet is exposed to a lethal dose. Which means we have to be fast"

"How fast?" Lexa was tense, and the looks tossed around the room weren't easing her nerves any.

"We have to create the hole within forty five minutes of launching the first rocket, and be ready to launch the atomizer rockets to repair the atmosphere within ten minutes of the first round ending. It's going to be tight. We are going to need everyone at the DEO on hand to make this work, and I have my entire staff from L- Corp on standby to assist us tomorrow morning"

Raven nodded, "You have the hospitals prepared?"

Lena sighed, "They know of the plan. Preparing is a bit complicated with the current situation. They want us to launch now, but it's going to take all night to get everything in place. As it is, the DEO is pulling an all nighter. Half my staff is already here assisting. We have more coming from the metropolis office to assist, and it will take them hours to get here through the gridlock."

Winn broke back into the conversations, "The models all look good. And we have two hours tops before people start being exposed to too much radiation, so that gives us a little wiggle room."

Lena sighed, "Good. Let's get those numbers down to the teams setting up the rockets. They have to be programmed and ready to fire at 06 hundred sharp."

Lena glanced around the room, "Once that's done, we should all get some rest. Tomorrow is going to be a rough day, and we all need to be on top of our game."

"What am I going to be doing?" Lea asked, afraid to find out

Lena nodded, "According to your mothers you are going to be on hand to cast a protective sell, an artificial atmosphere in case we aren't able to get other atmosphere repaired in time. It will actually

benefit us to have Mal and Lily back in Storybrooke because they can help. And Regina apparently reached the dragon, whoever that is, and he's reaching out to his contacts around the world."

"A world wide shield?"

Lena nodded, " I thought my job was hard. I do not envy you"

Raven sighed, " Why do I get the feeling I am on double duty?"

Lena laughed, " You are, sorry"

Winn nodded as the last of the files was transferred to the drive and he grinned, "Okay, I'm taking these down now. See you in the morning Reyes"

Both Lena and Raven answered him before staring at each other in confusion. Raven hastily explained, " My adoptive mom's last name on the Ark"

Lena nodded and smirked as winn tapped Raven on the shoulder, " I meant you, though I'll see you tomorrow as well, Reyes, Luthor? Which do you prefer?" He asked, his nose scrunching in confusion. Lena shrugged, " I am both, so... either I suppose?"

He nodded in agreement, " Alright, sleep tight folks."

Lexa watched Raven trail his disappearing figure down the hall and smirked when Raven sighed.

Lexa elbowed her, " Crushing Raven?"

Raven blushed furiously and glared at her sister, " He literally just broke up with his girlfriend, besides, we're just friends"

Lena grinned, " He's a great guy. A little naive sometimes, but he's sweet, so don't break his heart"

Lexa smirked at Lena, " A bit protective aren't we?"

Lena shrugged, " He's.. Kinda like a little brother. After Lex went to prison, and my father died, and my... Lillian went crazy, I never saw

myself having a family again, but... Kara's friends have filled that gap for me. So yeah, I'm a little protective. He's helped me save National city a few times"

Raven grumbled, " It doesn't matter, we are going back to storybrooke anyway."

Lena arched an eyebrow at Raven, "So you won't date long distance?"

Raven glanced at Lena with so much hope Lexa couldn't help but chuckle, " Wait, you can do that here? How does that work?"

" Video and voice calls, take turns travelling to see each other, whatever it takes to make it work"

Raven nodded thoughtfully, " maybe, but I don't know if he's even interested"

Lena laughed outright, " Oh, he's interested, trust me"

Lexa glanced at the clock on the wall and nearly squealed in excitement, " Clarke and Kara should be back any minute!"

Lena followed her gaze, " Oh thank god. That went faster than I thought it would, but..."

" You wanna see your girl?" Raven teased.

Lena flushed, " She's... not my girl"

"Oh please, as the daughter of the two gayest women on the planet and the twin sister of the legendary lesbian commander, that girl is head over heels for you"

Lena stared at her, " Really? You think so?"

Lexa was sputtering, her mind filled with all the times her mothers were gag inducingly cute together and defended herself weakly, " I'm not *that* gay."

Raven raised an eyebrow at her and Lena giggled, "Sorry Lexa, but I have to agree with Raven on this, you definitely are. When Clarke is

in the room, you don't see or hear anyone else. You look at her like nothing else exists"

" It's kind of disgusting" Raven added helpfully.

Lexa shoved Lena playfully, " Oh like you're any better Reyes." Lena blushed and smiled at the use of her birth mother's last name as hers.

Raven watched them with a smile, " Well, go on, you giant gay babies, go see your girls. I am gonna clean up and head to bed."

" And dream of Winn?"Lexa couldn't help herself as she fired the retort back at Raven though she immediately regretted it when Raven launched a paperback manual across the room at her. She ducked just in time and laughed, ducking out of the room swiftly. She was grateful that even with the history that still needed to be resolved between her and her sister, they were making strides together.

Kara and J'onn were standing on the balcony having a brief meeting with Alex and Maggie when they reached the main level and Lexa's gaze roamed the room, trying to locate Clarke. Lena nudged her playfully, " See, she's not even in the room yet and your whole world has already narrowed to her."

Lexa blushed as she realized that Lena and RAVen had a point. She didn't care though. How could she when she finally saw CLarke leave the room she had changed in and walk towards her, back in dark cargo pants, a deep blue shirt and the tight fitted brown leather jacket. Clarke grinned as she approached, and brushed Lexa's cheek with a light kiss as their fingers tangled together. Lexa stood there quietly, feeling the deep peace overtake her once more. After another thirty minutes of briefing, everyone said their goodnights and went their separate ways. Lena gave Kara a tight lingering hug before allowing her mother to wrap an arm around her shoulders and lead her to the hall where they were staying. Lexa watched the longing on Kara's face for a moment and nodded at the kryptonian when she caught Lexa staring. Lexa mouthed, " Tell her"

And watched Kara process this before sighing and nodding.

Clarke smirked, "We are turning into your moms"

“How?” Lexa asked, confused as to how Clarke seemed to be on the same wavelength as her discussion with Lena and Raven.

“ Meddling in other people’s relationships?”

Lexa laughed, “ Yeah, I guess we are, but hey, it worked for us, didn’t it?”

Clarke nodded, “ Though I’d like to think we would have gotten there eventually”

Lexa frowned, “ I don’t know. I was very afraid. I thought love was weakness. I don’t know if I would have acted on my feelings for you, or told you how I felt, before it was too late. Their arrival, their interference... it brought us together, and it saved my life.” She reminded Clarke who frowned at the reminder that Lexa had very nearly died, “ As much as I would like to think we would have gotten there alone... I don’t know that we would have”

Clarke sighed heavily, tightening her grasp on Lexa’s hand as they walked, “Then thank god for meddling moms”

Lexa smirked and agreed. They said goodnight to their family and Lexa frowned at the devious smirk on Zelena’s face as she hugged them both. She winked as she pulled back and leaned in conspiratorially, “ I took the liberty of casting a silencing spell on your room. So you too can be as friendly, and loud as you like”

Clarke blushed furiously and Emma laughed, as Abby smacked the redhead’s arm, hard, “ Zelena! There are some things about my daughter’s life I would rather not know!”

Zelena chuckled, “And now, thanks to me, you won’t. Honestly dear, you should be thanking me, unless you would rather hear...”

Abby looked ready to faint and Clarke was dragging Lexa from the room, her fingernails digging in painfully to Lexa’s arm. Lexa glanced at the blonde to see her face twisted in horror, and beet red. Emma laughed as she shooed them out of the room while Regina tried to sternly lecture Zelena on interfering with her daughter’s love life.

Clarke dragged them across the hall to their room and slammed the

door. Leaning against it, Clarke and Lexa burst out laughing. Clarke glared at her for several moments before beginning to chuckle herself and slowly, Clarke relaxed, "Talk about meddling moms, what about meddling aunts?"

Lexa smirked at Clarke, "She's annoying as hell, but you have to appreciate her foresight and thoughtfulness"

Clarke lost it all over again, her legs giving out under her as she slipped to the floor slowly, laughing so hard, she was crying, " My poor mother did you see her face!"

Lexa chuckled with her, and grinned when she saw the amusement on Clarke's face slowly morph into something else entirely. Lexa offered her hand and easily lifted Clarke from the floor, immediately tugging her into an insistent kiss.

. Clarke moaned when Lexa's fingers slid through her blonde locks, tugging her closer before pulling back suddenly, "What if she...?"

Lexa sighed, and raised her hands, testing the room before giving Clarke a salacious smirk, " She definitely did. Are we really going to let her thoughtfulness go to waste?"

Clarke stared at Lexa, equally amused and surprised by Lexa's forwardness before muttering, " Absolutely not" before diving in to kiss Lexa once more, her hands beginning to roam as she steadily back Lexa towards the bed.

" I hope you aren't too tired, we have 5 hours, and I fully intend to make the most of them"Clarke told her seriously between kisses.

Lexa groaned, she was in fact exhausted and found herself torn between the desire to make love to Clarke and get the sleep they both desperately needed.If Clarke kept setting her on fire with her hands This night was going to be longer than she had anticipated, but when Clarke's hands slid beneath her top and slip up her toned stomach, Lexa found she suddenly didn't care.

14. Trivoka Wuskripa

Notes for the Chapter:

I was asked for more Badass Emma... and she definitely needed some flushing out... so this was the result

Warning... this gets.... Dark. I mean Emma was the Dark One and while I've touched on just how dark she got during that time... this chapter really explores that, and the scars it left.

as a result, I feel it's only fair to warn that this is potentially triggering, since Emma experiences a bit of PTSD. I went light on a lot of the descriptions because... writing PTSD is hard, especially when you as an author wrestle with it yourself... I am going to add a graphic depictions of violence label in here... cause Emma still has some darkness and we are definitely gonna see her blow a gasket here soon.

Emma is absolutely a Badass character. But that Darkness also broke her down and made her feel unworthy and unlovable. so she kinda needed her own redemption arc. This chapter attempts to show a bit of that.

We also see some more healing to the SwanQueen relationship. both of them are incredibly strong women, with strong insecurities. I know Emma hasn't had a lot of chances to show off her ferocity in this story yet, but she will. but it also needs to make sense where a lot of that comes from and what drives it.

anywho. hopefully this chapter clears up a lot of the Brave enough plot points and flushes out the darker side of Emma's personality. she's... a complicated character to write.

Emma watched Regina shoo a flustered Zelena and Abby from their room after Lexa and Clarke fled. Emma felt the weight of the last few

days begin to catch up with her and sat on the edge of their bed with an exhausted sigh as Regina closed the door gently.

Regina turned and watched Emma for a long moment before crossing the room and sitting beside her on the edge of the bed, “ You alright dear?”

Emma wasn't sure how to answer her so she instead reached for Regina's hand and let their fingers tangle together before leaning into the brunette, resting her head on her shoulder.

Regina seemed to accept that Emma wasn't ready to talk and simply leaned into the blonde and kissed her hair. They sat that way for a while, and Emma traced patterns across Regina's knuckles as she processed her confusing mess of emotions.

So much had happened and changed in her life since since Emma had fallen through a portal with Regina into Lexa and Raven's world. From breaking things off with Killian only hours before the portal, to finding her daughters and becoming both invested in and involved in the whirlwind of political drama that was her oldest daughter's life, to the destruction of Lexa's world to bringing her family home, and now, dragging half her family directly into more danger, Emma was completely exhausted, in every way. While Regina had been coordinating with Storybrooke, Emma had been everywhere, putting out fires, solving crisis after crisis, trying to be what everyone needed her to be. She felt the weight of everyone's expectations, the ever present, always heavy weight of responsibility that came with her title, and the guilt of never quite measuring up.

Between that and the revelations Emma had hoped she wouldn't ever have to face with the removal of her family's memories, and all her insecurities about failing her family had come roaring back. While Regina had repeatedly forgiven her, Emma was still wondering when Regina would tire of finding out about another incident that had occurred during the missing years. It had significantly stalled their budding relationship and Emma wasn't sure it would recover.

Regina must have sensed her anxiety because without saying anything, she scooted back across the bed, leaning against the headboard and patted the empty space beside her. Emma hesitated

before kicking off her shoes and carefully taking her place beside Regina who wrapped an arm around her and drew Emma against her once more. Emma sighed as her head lay against Regina's shoulder. Regina toyed with her hair and slowly, Emma relaxed into the familiarity and comfort Regina offered.

“ Do you want to talk about it?”

Emma shook her head, “ Talking about it hasn't gone very well”

Regina sighed, “ No, I suppose it hasn't. That's mostly my fault and I'm sorry. My first instinct is to protect myself, rather than to hear you out. I'm working on it though, so be patient with me”

Regina evaluated Emma for a long moment before lifting the blonde's chin to meet her gaze. Emma was surprised at the warmth in the brunette's eyes, “ If you are waiting for me to decide I've had enough of you, you are going to be waiting for a very long time Emma.”

Emma tried to fight back the tears and lost. Regina wiped her eyes with her thumb, “Listen to me very carefully Miss Swan. What's done is done. It's not what I would have chosen, but there's no point in worrying about it now. It's done. I've forgiven you. And I am going to tell you the same thing I told our daughter.”

Emma lifted her head curiously and Regina smiled, her tone both warm, and firm, “ I don't give a damn about who you *were* Emma, or what you *did* . I want to know who you are now. I love the woman sitting beside me right now. I am in love with you, right here, right now. And you know something else?”

Emma asked softly, “ What?”

“ I've fallen for you, over and over again. No matter how many times life rips us apart, and tries to divide us, you and I, we always find our way back to each other and I always end up falling head over heels in love with an obnoxious blonde who loves to wear an atrocious leather jacket and deliberately annoy the hell out of me. How many times do you think I've fallen for you Miss Swan?”

Emma shook her head, sputtering, “ I... don't know, twice?”

Regina laughed, the smile on her face growing wider by the minute, “ Wrong. Try four times.”

Emma’s eyebrows shot up in disbelief, “ What? Four times, how do you figure that?”

Regina smirked, “ The first time I fell for you, was the very first night we met. Oh, and I fought it, tooth and nail believe me, I tried so hard to hate you, but by the time we had to deal with the trigger, I knew I was head over heels for you.”

Emma nodded, “ That’s the first time I fell for you as well, though I didn’t put a label on what I felt until Neverland. I just knew I wanted you to feel safe, to know you belonged”

Regina’s eyes were impossibly soft as she gazed at Emma, “ I did feel that way, around you and Henry. I couldn’t understand how you of all people could insist on believing in me after everything I put you through.”

Emma paused, “ You said four times? How’s that even possible?”

Regina smiled as she cupped Emma’s cheek, “ The second time was the alternate universe when Henry returned with you. There was just... something about you that felt so familiar. I trusted you, and I really couldn’t rationalize why. But the longer I was with you, the more my heart ached. I knew Robin was wrong for me. He was a stranger, but you...”

Emma shook her head in wonder, “ No wonder you weren’t keen on crashing his wedding”

“ Could you really blame me? I mean, Henry comes crashing through the woods, tells me I’m his mom and that I share him with some woman I’ve never met, then you come blazing in like the hero you are in those tight pants and that blue vest insisting on making sure I got my happy ending.”

Emma grinned, “ I knew you were checking me out in that vest”

Regina shrugged nonchalantly before continuing, “ The fourth time, well, I suppose it was really a continuation of the first, but I fell in

love with you all over again when you returned. My point though Emma, is that no matter what obstacles we've faced, or what version of you I meet, I always, inevitably fall head over heels in love with you"

Emma nodded seriously, " And the same is true for me. I never told you this, but Pan's curse?"

Regina nodded and Emma smiled, " When Hook gave me that memory potion... do you know who was the very first person I remembered?"

Regina shook her head, " Your parents?"

Emma laughed, " No. the first person I remembered was you in that ridiculously tight gray pantsuit after I found Henry at the playground and brought him home, and our crazy journey after that."

Regina grinned, " You just proved my point Emma. It's corny, and I hate using the un-charmings line, but in our case, it's really true, no matter what separates us, we always find each other. So it really doesn't matter to me, who you were during those last years, It doesn't matter what I learn over the years to come. None of it matters because no matter what I learn, it doesn't change the fact that I love you, and that in the end, we always choose each other, and our unconventional family. Nothing you tell me will change that."

Emma relaxed into the hand cupping her cheek and nodded, " Okay." her insecurities still warred with Regina's assurances.

Regina watched her for another moment, ensuring Emma truly accepted her statement and relaxed after a moment, pulling Emma back against her, " I love you Emma Swan. You gave me something better than a happy ending"

Emma glanced at her, " What's that?"

" A second chance at a happy beginning, and hope. More hope than I know what to do with. You bring so much joy and laughter into my life, no matter what's going on around us, and you steadily see the best in me, and seem to know how to draw it out of me."

Emma grinned, “ You do the same for me you know. You are the only one who doesn’t expect me to be someone I’m not. There’s no expectations with you, I can just be me and not be judged”

Regina drew Emma closer and Emma was wrapped in Regina’s soft Chamomile scent as Regina whispered, “ I am simply returning the favor Emma. you never shied from me in my darkest moments. You know more about me than Snow at this point, and yet you still support me”

Emma tangled their fingers together again, “ Always. You deserve that, someone having your back. Everyone needs that.”

The conversation lapsed into silence and Emma shifted until her head rested in Regina’s lap. She sighed happily when Regina’s fingers slid through her hair and scraped lightly against her scalp. After a few moments, she felt herself starting to doze off and Regina whispered, “ Emma, we should sleep”

Emma nodded blearily and crawled under the covers. Regina slid under as well and beckoned Emma closer. Emma’s head found its way to Regina’s chest as Regina wrapped an arm around her., her fingers once more finding their way to Emma’s scalp, “ Reshop, ai snogon” *goodnight my love* Regina whispered and Emma smiled sleepily.

Regina hadn’t used that particular phrase in twenty years, and Emma couldn’t help the dopey grin that worked its way across her features as she leaned up and kissed Regina lightly, “ Ai hod yu in Regina” before laying back against the brunette and tossing an arm and a leg lightly across her. Regina chuckled before kissing Emma’s head and relaxing into the bed.

After a few more moments of Regina gently massaging her scalp, Emma drifted off, dreaming of the early years with Regina and her beautiful little unconventional family.

Regina had been the one to decide to leave the family behind to contend with Hook while she and Henry whisked Emma away from it all. Emma

had initially refused but Regina pleaded, stating that Henry needed his mother, that they needed to be safe, away from the Darkness that exuded from every pore of Killian Jones. Emma finally agreed, if only to protect Regina and Henry, and Regina cast the spell that carried them to a land neither had been to before. Their arrival in the 100 universe dropped them into the middle of Ton DC. They had immediately been surrounded by grounder warriors, but something about Emma's appearance and the darkness swirling in her deep green eyes gave them pause. She used the opportunity to knock them out (much to Regina's dismay) and steal what supplies they needed before taking two horses and riding out as quickly as possible. Emma had nervously allowed Regina to help her swing into a saddle behind her, and Henry had eagerly swung into the saddle of his own horse.

Their first home was an abandoned little hut in the middle of the woods that Emma assumed was formerly a trading post that had been ransacked by a rival clan. They worked tirelessly to clean out the little home and while Regina worked to make it as sanitary as possible, Emma and Henry slaved on the daunting task of making the little abode livable, repairing leaks, replacing the door, putting up fencing and traps to make it more secure. Emma exhausted herself each day, pouring the rage of the dark ones into her tasks while her family watched her closely, concern in their eyes.

Regina watched Emma constantly. It took a while for Emma to realize those searching gazes were not driven by Regina's belief that she would fail, but her desire to ensure Emma didn't bear the burden of the darkness alone. Week after week, Emma slowly began to relax as Regina slowly became freer with her affection for Emma, and the burden of voices whispering dark thoughts and plans to her lightened day by day as the voices of her family drowned them out.

Two months into their stay, Regina and Emma finally gave into their budding relationship and made love for the first time. A month later... Emma felt an odd magic in her system that ran counter intuitive to her

dark magic. It was light and free and full of so much joy. Regina had noticed the difference in her mood and asked about it. Emma hadn't initially known why she felt lighter, but she was grateful all the same. Emma waited several weeks, and as the magic inside her began to grow, it became clearer and clearer to her, that wasn't the only thing growing inside of her.

Emma stared at the small stick she had conjured up and felt the lump in her throat grow. This shouldn't be possible. It isn't possible. The panic of losing Regina and Henry gripped her and refused to let go, the dark ones whispering furiously at the magic inside of her inhibiting their ability to control her. She had to tell Regina. She knew that. She could only hope Regina would believe her...

The first time Regina smiled in eight weeks, three days, five hours and seven minutes was when she hesitantly approached her partner at Emma's urging and placed her hand gently on the blonde's stomach. The twins had responded to the soft touch instantly, reaching out to their other mother with magic rather than kicking. They seemed to sense Regina still held reservations that Emma was indeed carrying their children. The second Regina felt that little flicker of magic, Emma's counting stopped, her heart stopping for a moment with it. Emma's pleas for Regina to believe her finally paid off. She hadn't seen Regina direct a smile like that at her in far too long. It made her knees weak. Regina guided her to a chair and began fussing over the blonde while Emma watched, whispering assurances and declarations of love to her and their growing twins. Emma smiled, and the burden in her heart felt a little lighter.

"I will not allow you to name our child after your mother. End of story"

"But you haven't even heard the name yet!" Emma protested

Henry watched his mother's argue, smirking when he realized this was another light hearted argument and nothing more serious.

As planned, Henry piped up, “ You said I could name her”

Regina glanced between the two of them and Emma tried to contain the mischievous grin on her face when Regina scrutinized her. Regina sighed, “ You two are up to something. Fine Henry, what is this name?”

He grinned, “ Well, you hate Snow, you hate any variation of white... you hate mary and margaret... so I was thinking... we could do something clever...”

She sighed, “ Oh dear...”

“ Hear me out. You will like this one, I promise.” Henry stated confidently

Regina glanced at Emma and the blonde nodded, still failing to contain her grin.

“ Fine, let's hear it”

“ So.. You know the whole prophecy slash nursery rhyme around Snow white right?”

Regina frowned, “ Of course Henry, but I don't see....”

Emma chimed in eagerly, “ We were thinking”

“ That's dangerous for your health dear...”

Emma huffed and Regina smirked, motioning for Emma to continue. Emma waited a moment longer to ensure she wouldn't be interrupted again before smirking, “ We were thinking we could play off that prophecy and her penchant for loving birds...”

“ Oh god.....” Regina braced herself against the chair and sighed in mock defeat, “ Okay, I'm ready... what terrible name have you come up with now?”

Henry nodded to Emma who nervously asked, “ Ravenna Marie?”

Emma watched Regina carefully. The woman was fully prepared to hate the name but after several moments of Regina biting her lip and avoiding their gazes as she process the name Emma prompted with a tiny smirk, “

Well?"

Regina sighed, " I don't... hate it"

Emma and Henry whooped and high fived and Regina slowly allowed the smile she had been hiding to show, "Ravenna, so... Raven for short?"

Emma nodded and Regina smirked, " It is rather clever...."

Emma wept the first time she held her little girls in her arms. If it wasn't for her magic and Regina's steadying presence, and surprising depth of medical knowledge concerning expectant mothers and newborns, she wouldn't have survived the birth of her little girls. But Regina was there, and her two little girls had finally arrived.

Regina and Henry swiftly cleaned and wrapped the little ones while Emma struggled to sit up. Regina turned around, and Emma dropped back against the pillow and returned the breathtaking smile on the brunettes face. Her eyes danced with joy, even as they filled with tears. Regina was talking to their girls with so much love that Emma was overwhelmed.

Henry was grinning as little Alexandria grabbed his pinky finger and refused to let go, " She's gonna be strong" he laughed. Regina carefully brought their 30 minute younger daughter to Emma and gently transferred her into emma's arms. She sat beside Emma on the bed and brushed Emma's hair from her face, giving her a light kiss, " Their beautiful Emma. look at them..."

Emma stared at the little girl in her arms, grinning at Regina, "She has your complexion, and look at those eyes..."

Regina smiled, and little Ravenna cooed at her moms. Regina motioned Henry over with Alexandria and they all three squeezed onto the small bed, oohing and aweing at the two new additions to the family.

It was Emma who dubbed Ravenna as " pequeña ave". Regina loved it, and it immediately stuck.

Emma immediately relaxed when she rode into the familiar meadow on horseback, grinning when her three year old daughters spotted her entering the small clearing. Being the Dark One was always a heavier burden when she was alone and the only time those voices quieted was when she was home with her precious little family. She smiled as she led her horse to the stable nestled between the smokehouse and the home she had built with her own two hands as soon as she was back on her feet after giving birth. Regina had wanted to use magic, but Emma had insisted on doing it herself, stating that she wanted the satisfaction of having done it herself, without the heavy price of her magic. Regina had simply nodded her agreement.

She and Henry had done the majority of the construction, waking early each morning and staying out until dusk to build their new home.

Regina had cried when she saw the small cottage Emma had built, complete with a room for Henry and a room for the twins, as well as a slightly larger master for her and Regina. Regina had immediately stated that she adored it, surprising Emma with a kiss that literally knocked her feet from under her.

As the little girls grew, Emma continued to add buildings to the small clearing they called home. First was the stables she built with Henry, then the smokehouse and Emma was completely unsurprised when little Raven had insisted on helping them build the smokehouse as soon as she was strong enough to lift a hammer. Both of her little girls demonstrated a strong love for learning, but Lexa preferred strategy type games, and Raven loved to work with her hands.

The twins ran to her as she easily swung herself out of the saddle and dropped heavily booted feet to the ground. She swung the reins around the fence post easily and without missing a beat, whipped around and caught her twin girls in her arms, lifting them easily as they excitedly chattered about their day. She swung them around once and gently lowered them back to the ground, “Hola pequeños, ¿Te has portado bien con tu madre?” hello little ones, have you behaved for your mother?

They both nodded seriously though Raven giggled and tossed Lexa a sly grin. Emma glanced up to see Regina giving Emma one of her blinding smiles from the small porch. Emma’s heart stopped for a moment before racing harder than before. Emma never failed to gasp when that smile was

directed at her. It still amazed her that Regina could see past the tall walls and armor of the Dark One to see what remained of her underneath. Emma waved at Regina and the brunette waved back, calling the twins inside.

Emma led her girls across the small meadow to the crude home she had built for her growing family. Henry emerged from the trees, and held up a rope with several small animals, “ Look what I caught Ma!” She grinned at the boy, waiting for him to cross the field so she could ruffle his hair, “ Well done Henry.”

Regina ushered the girls inside the small home before turning and giving Emma a kiss that had her toes tingling, “ Ha yun, ai snogon”

Emma grinned and pressed another gentle kiss to Regina’s lips, “ Ha yun. Did the little ones behave for you?”

Regina nodded, “ I never have a problem with them. I don’t understand why they give you such a hard time, but their always perfect angels for me”

Henry heard his brunette mother and smirked, “ Yeah right, don’t listen to her ma, unless... of course, by perfect angels mom means them sneaking out this morning before anyone was awake to run into the forest and undo all my traps this morning and setting every one of the animals free. I thought that was them being little twits. My mistake”

Regina tossed her son a playful glare and he grinned, “ Yeah, that’s what I thought”

Emma mocked sighed in relief, “ I thought it was just me, but I am relieved to know I am not the only one who has trouble reining them in”

Regina turned the glare on her but Emma found it hard to take the glare seriously when Regina’s eyes were alight with laughter as she retorted, “ I am not a pushover Miss Swan”

Emma gave Regina a long suffering sigh, “ Seriously, the Miss Swan thing again?”

Regina just smirked as Emma pretended to be her, “ Oh stop pretending that you don’t get all hot and bothered when I call you that”

Henry cleared his throat, “ Yeah, okay, I’m gonna go to the smokehouse and take care of these...” Emma glanced at her son in time to see the blush and slight grimace at the obvious affection between his mother's. She smirked at him, “ off you go then.”

Emma stepped inside their home and catching the arched brow Regina directs at her and swiftly kicks off her dirty boots. Regina helps her shed her heavy woolen cloak before trying to lift one of the heavy satchels Emma had set down, “ what the hell is in these things?”

Emma laughed before easily taking the satchels from her, “ you wanted books to teach the girls, right?”

Regina nodded curiously and Emma handed her several crudely bound volumes, “ I had to ride all the way to Polis for these. These are student manuals, they teach trigedasleng, and the basic subjects. Honestly, they are better than the textbooks back home”

Regina grinned, kissing Emma, “ Thank you ai snogdon”

Emma smiled, “ Don't thank me yet”

“ There’s more?” Regina asked surprised.

She lifted the second satchel and placed it on the heavy wooden table, “ I brought seeds for the garden, and I saw these...”

Emma lifted out several artistically crafted pots and pans, with intricately carved handles. Regina gasped as she picked up each one and inspected the craftsmanship, “ These are stunning Emma. they must have cost a fortune.”

Emma smiled, “ maybe, but I saw them and thought of you immediately. I was assured they are heat resistant and will last a very long time”

Regina set them down gently to tug Emma in for another kiss. Their little girls made disgusted sounds and giggled at the display of affection between the two. “ Mochof Emma,” Emma stared at the tears in Regina’s eyes with confusion, “ Why are you crying?”

Regina gave her a watery smile, “ I didn’t think it was possible, loving you, missing you so much”

Emma nodded and wrapped her arms around Regina, “ I missed you too Regina. More than you know”

Regina pulled back and Emma shuffled her feet as Regina’s gaze pierced her, searching for signs of the darkness Emma battled daily, “ Are you alright?”

Emma nodded, shaking off the days on the road with a smile, “ I am now” She wasn’t going to discuss the fact that she lost her temper and terrified several traders while her little girls were around to hear it.

Regina watched her closely for another moment before giving Emma the look that clearly stated, we will talk later.

Emma nodded and Regina let it go, for now.

It was a few months later that Emma first learned of the prophecy concerning her family. She was in Ton DC, on a mission for the current commander when she heard Ton DC’s seda share the prophecy. Emma was immediately grateful that she was seated far enough back from the large fire that most of her form was cast in shadows. Her entire body stiffened at the mention of a line of saviors, and when it was mentioned that several saviors were already known to the grounders, she disappeared into the black night.

Over the next few days Emma asked around quietly at first, but quickly tired of playing nicely when her search brought no clear answers.

Tiring of a fruitless search, Emma listened to those terrible voices beckoning for her to cave into the darkness and do what was necessary to protect her family. They reminded her of Cruella’s fate when she dared threaten Henry’s life. “ Step up. Do what you must or you will lose them all” they taunted. Within days Emma had earned that terrible name, Trivoka Wuskripa, monster in the shadows. She terrorized settlements, trying to learn where the prophecy originated, trying to ascertain what the grounders knew. By the time a village knew she was there, those hired to track down this realms saviors were dead, and Emma, the monster, had slinked back into the shadows. She didn’t return home for a month, sending a message to Regina via courier to let her know she was on

business. A mistake she didn't know she would pay dearly for.

Finally, after five weeks of stealing every book that referenced the prophecy, and killing every tracker she came across, she rode back into that small meadow. This time, it was late, and only Regina was awake to see her arrival. Had Emma been more alert, she would have spotted the four grounders hiding in the tree line. She could have stopped the horrors her family was about to experience. But she was too exhausted and caught up in checking on her family, in reassuring a frantic Regina when her love returned to her covered in dirt and grime and with a darkness swirling in her eyes that made her pause before approaching Emma.

Emma refused comfort from Regina for hours that night. It took the whole evening for Emma to allow Regina to so much as touch her. The second she did, Emma completely broke down, her shoulders shaking violently as she sobbed. Regina was incredibly gentle and patient, seeming to sense Emma was unable to voice what was wrong. Regina had whispered comfort to the blonde as she helped her out of her armor, carefully checked her for wounds and set a bath for her. By the time Emma had scrubbed herself clean, her armor had vanished and all traces of her terrible journey had been erased by the woman she loved. Regina had wordlessly returned and emptied the tub before ushering her into clean clothes and placed her before the fire, taking the few crude ingredients they had left to make Emma a piping hot cup of hot cocoa before sitting on the rough floor beside her. She sat beside Emma, urging the blonde to actually drink the cocoa

Just before dawn, just as Emma fell into a troubled sleep under Regina's watchful gaze, they came. Regina heard a muffled cry from the twins room and after shaking Emma awake with a panicked expression that immediately sent ice through the blonde's veins, Regina was dashing down the hall.

Emma locked Henry in the room with little Ravenna, protecting them with magic and tore across the field after Regina and the grounders. Lexa screamed for her mother's. They would have succeeded, in saving their little girl, if the grounders hadn't brought reinforcements. But they had and upon seeing Regina and Emma fight the two burly grounders, two more emerged from the trees, arrows notched in their bows. Emma had screamed at Regina to duck, but it was too late. The brunette never saw it coming and suddenly dropped to the ground with two arrows protruding

from her chest.

Emma screamed and moved towards Regina, not thinking, and the moment she turned away, something hard and cold slammed into her skull, and she dropped in a graceless heap, Regina's name on her lips.

When she awoke moments later, the meadow was empty, the sun was peaking over the horizon and Regina was bleeding out beside her. Emma cried out for her, removed the arrows and poured as much magic into the woman as she could without exacting a cost that would leave Regina like Hook. She lifted the broken brunette into her arms and ran back to the house screaming for her son. He came running, crying out when he saw his brunette mother limp in her arms. Panicked he told her that someone had come back in, gotten through the magical barrier, tossed him across the room and stolen Raven's heart. Reacting instinctively, Emma took Raven and vanished from view, promising Henry she would return. Emma took little Raven to the space station she sensed in the sky, desperately hoping keeping her daughter in the sky would protect her. Emma had met Abby in her search for answers and the woman immediately agreed to care for the young infant, swearing she would protect Raven with her life, and find the missing heart. Emma returned to the tiny meadow, carried Henry and Regina back to Storybrooke, carefully depositing the brunette into a hospital bed while screaming for Dr. Whale at a decibel that had the entire staff scurrying around desperately. Emma barked orders at Henry, demanding that he look after his mom while she tried to save her girls.

Her next stop was Camelot, dragging the rest of her family back and placing them all under a powerful spell to ensure their safety. She was completely numb at this point, unaware of the darkness that was slowly succeeding at completely overtaking her. The spell she cast over the town ensured that Regina and Henry would not remember her, or their precious little girls until Emma returned. They would only remember that Regina had been robbed at gunpoint and was shot by the perpetrator, who later committed suicide by cop when David inevitably tracked him down. She felt terrible, leaving her true love alone in a hospital bed, but their little girls were missing, and she needed the rest of her family safe, protected before she went after her little girls and their kidnappers. She kissed her true love's forehead, whispering a promise to reunite her family and

vanished, leaving them alone. Emma had no idea how long she would be away from them, or just how much she would change in order to accomplish her goal.

It took several weeks to track down the four grounders who took her daughter. By then, Emma had become dark and twisted beyond recognition. She appeared suddenly in the village, laughing as everyone ran for cover screaming. She easily caught the cloak of a young man attempting to dash past her and yanked him back, “Bring out your trackers, or this one dies.”

Nothing stirred for a long moment and then a volley of arrows descended upon her. She yanked the teenager in front of her, and heard the camp scream when dozens of arrows littered his now limp form. She dropped him unceremoniously and batted the new volley of arrows out of her way as if they were gnats. “You were warned. This is your last chance, bring out the two men who kidnapped my daughter, or the same wrath that befell your Trikru neighbors will rain upon you as well!”

Two men emerged from the shadows slowly, and Emma tensed. Their hands were raised in surrender and she motioned them forward.

“Be braver than the other two fools. And tell me. Who told you of my daughters?”

One of the men muttered something under his breath and she grabbed him by the throat, easily lifting the man twice her size off of his feet, “Speak up. Who. Told. You. To. Take. My. children from me?!”

He swallowed and squeaked out, “he.. Called himself a Dark One... metal hand...”

Ice ran through Emma’s veins, “Are you telling me that Killian Jones did this?”

The man shook his head, trembling, “Don’t know his name, just... Dark One. Said your daughters were saviors, to bring them to be trained, to only kill if you interfered”

Emma reared back and threw the man across the camp, advancing swiftly

to reach down to his prone form and rip the heart from his chest before doing the same to the second man, “ Kill each other. Whoever remains, raze this village to the ground. You will not stop until no one remains. You will set it ablaze and when nothing but ashes remain, you will crush your own heart”

The men immediately launched themselves at each other and Emma raised a circle of fire, trapping the entire camp within, awaiting their doom. She tossed their hearts over her shoulder as she vanished, leaving the village to destroy itself from the inside.

Emma spent months tracking Killian only to have him slip through her grasp. The villages he sought solace in bore the brunt of her frustration upon discovering she had just missed him yet again. When word reached her that her oldest was being trained as natblida, she abandoned her search for Killian and went instead to Polis. Immediately upon her arrival, Lexa’s combat trainer fell sick with a mysterious illness, and died.

Emma easily adopted the persona of a trainer she had come across from the Boat clan and was summoned by the commander to train the natblida. The disguise worked, only her daughter seemed to sense she was not who she pretended to be. Over the next few years, Emma trained Lexa tirelessly, working to ensure her daughter alone would survive the inevitable conclave. She raised Lexa to be ruthless, but she tried desperately to temper her training with the understanding that there was a time to be compassionate. When she was with her daughter, her daughter would see glimpses of the old Emma, her loving mother.

But during her nights, Emma tracked Killian across multiple realms, saving savior after savior from his clutches. It was becoming clear that Dark One Killian felt incredibly threatened by the prophecy and wouldn’t stop until every last savior from her and Regina’s line was destroyed, along with everyone they loved. Emma plowed on, training one daughter, frequently checking in on Raven and terrorizing Abby with threats if her daughter ever came to harm, and traversing an endless number of realms, stopping Killian from destroying savior after savior, and furthering the darkness in her own heart during the process. Every attempt to take Lexa and run failed and eventually, as Lexa grew older, she no longer wanted to leave. The grounders were her people and on the morning of her

conclave, she gave her mother an emotional goodbye, “ nomon, ai hod yu in.” Lexa hesitated, her green eyes filling with tears, “ Do what you must, I am strong now, because of you. We will meet again”

Emma had checked on her younger daughter once more, threatening her caretakers within an inch of her life before dedicating all her attention to stopping Killian.

Emma had tracked Killian back to Storybrooke and easily modified the curse and her loved ones memories.

She hesitated before entering the small diner, hearing Regina asking where she was. She took a deep breath and changed her outfit to something less obvious and sauntered into the shop, her heart skipping a beat when soft brown eyes met her own. Emma nearly crumbled right there, nearly lost herself to her own grief and guilt. But she knew her family was not out of danger yet. Hook was determined to rip everything she loved from her and while his memories of the last twenty four years were gone for now, the temporary truce wouldn't last long.

So she built up the walls around her heart and surrendered the hope that Regina would ever love her again. She would save them, she would find a way to bring her girls home, and she would love them from afar. She didn't deserve their love, nor their forgiveness so she didn't expect it. She left her family behind and fled to the home she created in storybrooke to hide away in until her plan was complete and her family saved. She wept alone in that house, crying for everything she lost, sobbing for everything she had done in the name of protecting those she loved. She barely slept, and when she did, she was plagued by nightmares of every life she destroyed. She finally knew why a part of Regina had always expected for everyone to turn their back on her. Emma had managed to surpass the darkness of the Evil Queen and it tormented her endlessly, making listening to the foolish hope speeches her family gave her nauseous. So she avoided them and she ignored the familiar voice that called to her from outside her front door, knowing a great deal more separated her from her love than a simple door.

“Emma!” Emma bolted upright in the bed, arms swinging. Regina caught her arms easily, trapping them against her chest from behind as Regina murmured in her ear, “ It was a dream my love.”

Emma shuddered and fought to calm her racing heart and focus on Regina’s voice, “Easy, it’s just me”

Emma sobbed and Regina tightened her hold, “ We are all safe. No one is hurt. Our girls are just down the hall. It’s okay” Somehow Regina immediately sensed what the issue was.

Emma nodded desperately fighting the urge to rip herself away from the assurances Regina offered and instead worked to bring her breathing back under control, muttering, “ Ge smak daun, gyon op nodotaim” *get knocked down, get back up.*

She repeated the phrase Lexa had given her in Polis over and over again, trying to calm her heart rate. She slowly became more aware of her surroundings, and upon realizing Regina was holding her close she sobbed as she fought to free herself Regina’s hold on her, “ How?”

Regina seemed to intuitively understand what Emma was asking her and released her gently, her eyes following Emma as she paced the room, “ Emma....”

“No. I need to know. How can you sit there and call me your love. How can you sit there and forgive me, when you don’t even know half the things I’ve done?”

Regina reached for the blonde and took her trembling hands into her own, “ You are not broken Emma. You are not undeserving of love or forgiveness. You...”

“ Tore out people’s hearts and watched as they destroyed each other, because I was angry Regina. I toyed with people’s lives. I destroyed entire villages in revenge. I did whatever I wanted and I justified it. I was a monster” She expected a reaction from Regina, anger, disbelief, something, but Regina’s expression was calm while imploring Emma to listen.

“ So was I” Regina reminded her.

Emma protested, “ Yeah, but you changed, you became something else, someone different. I was someone good, and I became something twisted... And...”

Regina tipped Emma’s chin up, forcing the blonde to meet warm chocolate eyes, “You are afraid, of what you are still capable of, of what you will do to someone who threatens your family”

Emma swallowed, “ I still... wrestle with it Regina. You have no idea what I have to do to rein myself in. If Abby hadn’t destroyed Titus...”

“ You would have torn his own heart out and told him to destroy himself while you watched?”

Emma nodded, and Regina sighed, “ I would have done the same Emma.”

Emma started to protest and Regina stopped her with a sharp look, “ Don’t tell me about my struggle with Darkness Emma. Yes, I’ve changed. Yes, I’ve overcome a great deal. But if you think for one moment that I’m not still capable of destroying someone for threatening my family, you are dead wrong.”

Emma nodded, “ I’m sorry, I shouldn’t assume”

“No, you shouldn’t. But Emma, you are missing the point. We are all capable of great evil, under the right circumstances. Have you already forgotten what your parents were willing to do to protect you? Was ripping a child from her mother and sending her to another land without a soul to look out for her evil?”

Emma swallowed, “ Yes.”

Regina continued to press the issue, “Does that decision make them beyond redemption and forgiveness?”

Emma shook her head, “ No, but...”

Regina interrupted her, “ What about snow's decision to force me to kill my own mother against my own will? Is that an evil act?”

“Yes.”

“ Is your mother beyond redemption or forgiveness?”

Emma sighed, “ No Regina, but she...”

“ But *nothing* Emma. We are *all* capable of committing atrocities. We are *all* guilty of doing horrific things to people we love, as well as strangers. That doesn’t make you unloveable, unredeemable, it makes you human. Stop expecting your family to continue punishing you. You’ve paid enough for your crimes already.”

“How can you make light...”

Regina was angry and Emma cowered at her booming voice, “ I’m not making light of anything Emma Swan. But I will not allow you to sit there and tell me that my crimes are somehow forgivable while yours are not. They are one and the same Emma. and I forgive you because I love you and I choose to let the past stay where it belongs. I know it torments you. I still have nightmares too Emma. I still wake up after spending hours tormented by those whose lives I destroyed. It’s still a burden I bear, but I don’t bear it alone. Stop it. Stop isolating yourself and shutting me out because it’s what you think you deserve”

Regina noticed Emma leaning away from her and sighed, “ I’m sorry, I know yelling at you doesn’t help.”

Emma nodded and accepted the apology, “ I just... I know you keep saying that you wouldn’t go back and change any of the things you did, because it brought you Henry... “

“ And you, and our girls Emma” Regina reminded her and Emma nodded in acknowledgement, “ But I’m not there yet. I’m just not at a place mentally where I can accept what I’ve done, the costs, and let my family’s safety and presence in my life balance it all out. I... don’t know if I ever can reach that point.”

Regina nodded, “ It took me a long time to get there Emma. And it’s not that having my family balances it out, it’s that... having my family, allowing you all to be there for me, and remind me of my potential... makes the burden lighter, it makes carrying the weight of

my crimes worth it.”

Emma sighed, “ I’m just not there yet... and... I am still waiting for the other shoe to drop, because whenever I’m finally happy, and let my guard down...”

“ Everything goes to hell. I felt the same way Emma. I still do sometimes. But I’ve learned that it’s okay, in those moments, when the other shoe does drop, that it’s okay to lean on my loved ones. It’s okay to need their help. And it’s okay to wrestle with the temptations of the darkness.”

Emma slowly relaxed and let Regina draw her back to the bed. Sitting on the edge beside Regina she felt their magic link, and peace slowly slid through her veins, easing the tension in her shoulders.

“ I don’t ever want to become that person again. I don’t want to be a monster, but Regina... when I get my hands on Gold and CSM...”

Regin nodded firmly and Emma stared at the darkness that momentarily swirled in Regina’s eyes, “We will do what is necessary to protect our family and deal with the consequences Emma, together.”

Emma nodded, “ I want to destroy them both. I’m... furious with Hook for making a deal with CSM, but.. That’s who he was... it’s not him anymore”

Regina glowered at the mention of the pirate and took a deep breath and asked, “ You know.. With my memories back, it makes even less sense that you went back to him after everything that happened. I know you’ve left quite a bit out Emma but even with the little I do know, why in the world would you go back to him?”

Emma sighed heavily, “ I thought... we deserved each other. I had resigned myself to the fact that as a result of my choices, I would never deserve your love, and... I was convinced that Hook was right, and that he was better with me. He... was so broken when he remembered what he had done and the darkness was done, and I was worried... worried he wouldn’t be able to live with the guilt without my help... I needed to save him. I needed... to fix it, or at least try...

“

Regina shook her head, “ You are not responsible for a single thing Hook did while he was the Dark One Emma. that man made his own choices. I know part of you still cares for him, and I can accept that, but Emma... Hook isn’t strong like you.”

Emma shook her head, preparing to disagree but Regina stopped her, “ Listen to me. You have a strength that has always fascinated me. Your love drives you. It makes you stronger. You overcame the darkness over and over again for your family, for those you loved. You are the only one in the history of the Dark Ones to choose your love, your family over the darkness”

“ But I caved....”

“ Even that was driven by your love. Sure, the darkness overtook you at times and twisted that love into something else, but Emma Swan, I’ve never met anyone whose love is as strong as yours. You have proven time and time again that Love is stronger than anything”

Emma shook her head, smiling through her tears, “ I can think of one stronger than me... you”

Regina laughed, “ Only because I had an obnoxious blonde who gifted me with her son, a son with the same penchant for seeing the best in people, and then she showed me day after day that I couldn’t just be better, but that I already was better because of love”

Regina cupped Emma’s cheek, “ You have a strength I’ve never seen in anyone before. You love fiercely, you defend the weak and abused, you continuously surprise everyone with your ability to love, your ability to see the best in people. You are a badass. You trust your instincts. You see past the walls people build to protect themselves.”

Emma laughed, tears slipping down her cheeks as Regina lifted her chin, “You Emma Swan, are a badass and I am head over heels in love with you, darkness and all.”

Emma released the breath she had unconsciously been holding and relaxed into the hug Regina offered. The brunette seemed to know

exactly how to address her fears and insecurities.

For the first time in years, Emma felt the little spark of hope she carried around inside of her come back to life. She felt... like herself. Somehow, Regina had rekindled the confidence Emma had lost, in herself, in her ability to love and be loved.

Regina caught the change of expression on Emma's face and arched a brow at her, slowly allowing the smile on her own face to grow as she finally recognized the blonde woman in front of her, " There's the Emma Swan I know. I wondered if I would ever see her again..."

Emma grinned and reached for Regina and kissed her with a fire that had Regina gasping in surprise before kissing her back fiercely.

Regina breathlessly warned, "Emma, it's four thirty, we have to get up in half an hour..."

Emma grinned, " Thirty minutes, that's plenty of time" she swiped her tongue across Regina's bottom lip before sucking said lip into her mouth and Regina groaned, surrendering herself to Emma.

Notes for the Chapter:

sighs I'm still too much of a chicken to write smut... so.. for now hinting at sexy times will have to be enough. lol.

What did you guys think of this chapter... was Emma flushed out enough? Trust me, we are gonna see some badass moments with her here soon. but since everyone was asleep, a trip down memory lane was the best way to convey her strength in this chapter. This girl has some hardcore PTSD

15. Saving the World... Again

Notes for the Chapter:

posting about once a week seems to be what's feasible for me at the moment, since I typically write this during the calm moments at work... so expect a chapter about every Friday from here on out...

So this chapter... fluff, drama and... angsty plot twist that you guys likely saw coming... LOL. This chapter took a while to write...

Honestly, there is SO MUCH CRAZINESS in my life right now. I am having to move this month, yes... again for those of you who remember that I moved seven months ago. It sucks, and I will likely have to move again in a year, but hopefully by then I will have the finances to move and not have to do it again... anyway, between that and both me and my roommates health issues, I am seriously stressed. Working on this story usually provides relief, but I had writers block for like four days, and in that time, my PTSD has flared for no apparent reason and my whole body has broken out in hives. positive vibes would be greatly appreciated if you could send em my way...

anywho, enough about my life drama. the chapter is finally finished, and I am reasonably satisfied with it. hopefully you guys enjoy it as well. there's not as much humor in this one, but some definite fluff sprinkled throughout ... so... enjoy...

Regina ran her fingers up and down Emma's spine as they spent a few moments wrapped in each other's arms. Emma hummed in contentment and Regina was sorely tempted to hit the snooze button a third time for five more minutes of peace with her true love.

Emma glanced up at her and grinned as the alarm went off yet again, "Five more minutes?"

Someone knocked on their door rather harshly and Regina winced, “ I’m afraid if we keep them waiting much longer, they will break the door down, and that would be rather traumatic for both parties, don’t you think dear?”

Emma sighed, “ You’re probably right...” As she leaned up and gave Regina a lingering kiss that had her rethinking her decision to get up, “ Thank you, by the way”

“What for my love?”

Emma blushed at the term of endearment and Regina was again surprised and slightly heartbroken by how hard it was for Emma to accept resuming their relationship where they had left off twenty years ago. She understood that it would take them both time to find their footing again, but with Emma, it just felt right to pick up there, even with her returned memories of a failed marriage with Robin. The fact that Regina had been married may give Emma pause, but for Regina, it only further cemented the fact that Emma was her true love, not her now deceased ex husband.

She realized Emma was talking to her, “ Sorry dear, I zoned out”

Emma nodded, brushing her fingers up Regina’s side gently, “ It’s okay, I was just saying thank you for helping me find myself again. I’ve... missed this version of me...”

Regina nodded, “ As did I. you are not meant to be meek or mild Emma, nor are you someone who stands in another’s shadow. It’s not who you are, it never was. Seeing you like that... that hurt me more than anything else we’ve been through”

Emma nodded, “ I just... fell into the trap of trying to be what everyone needed from me”

Regina tipped Emma’s chin and met the blonde’s gaze, “ All your family needs from you is for you to be yourself Emma. Any other version of you is watered down. And anyone who asks you to be someone else, to hide even a part of yourself away is not worthy of your time or consideration. It’s not worth losing yourself to someone who clearly doesn’t appreciate you”

Emma nodded, “ I know. And I’m sorry.”

“ Don’t apologize, just be you. I rather like the original Emma.”

Emma grinned, “ I can do that”

Regina kissed her, murmuring against her lips, “ It’s nice to see the fire in your eyes again Emma. I’ve missed that spark...”

Emma smirked, “Have you now... perhaps you could show me...”

Regina almost responded but someone pounded on the door again and Zelena yelled through, “Would you two lazy bums get your arses out of bed and get a move on already?”

Emma smirked at Regina, “ Would you mind terribly if I fireballed her ass?”

Regina chuckled, “ Best not dear... Zelena can be quite... vindictive”

“ I heard that!” Zelena yelled.

“ Fine Z, we are getting up...” Regina called, rolling her eyes.

“ Finally!” Zelena stated with exasperation, “ I swear, if you two are not dressed and in the cafeteria in five minutes, I will break down this door and there won’t be any more privacy for hanky panky until we are back home”

Emma blushed and Regina laughed.

Zelena waited outside the door a moment longer as Emma and Regina crawled out of bed and began dressing for the day. She glared at them when the door finally opened, “ Honestly, you two... I didn’t know you two would be getting it on as well. The whole damned hall heard you both...”

Regina blushed this time and Emma waved her hand stealing Zelena’s voice for a moment, grinning with delight when the redhead tried to speak and smacked her in irritation.

“ Are you done?” Emma grinned sweetly and the redhead glared at

her. Emma chuckled as returned her voice and Zelena immediately berated her, “ Honestly, must you two always take away my voice every time I annoy you? I hate when you do that...”

“ Well dear, if you would stop announcing our sex life to the entire DEO, silencing you wouldn't be necessary, now would it?”

Zelena scoffed, “Me announcing it? You two were the ones getting busy without bothering with a silencing spell. Everyone on the floor heard you two. Had I known you were too lazy to cast a simple spell, I would have happily done it for you. You’ve traumatized your children, and mine” Zelena pointed out primly.

Emma blushed and shrugged, “ Sorry...”

Zelena shrugged, “Tell our kids and the DEO agents that.”

Regina took Emma’s hand in her own and headed to the cafeteria, noticing the odd glances she was getting from everyone.

She blushed again and Zelena laughed at her discomfort, “Bet you won’t be forgetting that spell again anytime soon eh sis?”

Regina glanced at Emma, “ You know what? I’ve changed my mind. Feel free to fireball her ass”

Zelena darted down the hall out of range chuckling before calling over her shoulder, “ I’m happy you two finally worked things out, it was entirely too depressing to watch you two before”

Emma squeezed Regina’s hand and leaned into the brunette with a content smile, “ We are too Z.”

The cafeteria was packed, and a large breakfast was already waiting, courtesy of one Cat Grant. She spotted Regina and Emma’s joined hands, and the way they leaned into one another and grinned at the brunette, “ It’s about time. Another relationship saved by Cat Grant”

Regina arched a brow at the blonde. She wasn’t sure what to make of the “ Queen of Media”. On one hand, the woman was infuriatingly arrogant, but Regina saw a softness and vulnerability in the woman’s eyes that intrigued Regina. Cat Grant was a complicated woman.

Emma squeezed Regina's hand and leaned in her ear, " She's a blonde version of you."

Regina scoffed, "No one is quite like me dear"

Emma chuckled, " Oh you are one of a kind, you're right about that, but you can't seriously tell me you don't see the similarities."

Regina shook her head, denying it though she knew Emma was right. Emma chuckled, "So you don't hide behind a mask of indifference and come off as an insufferably haughty know it all while secretly having a soft side and a giant heart three sizes too big?"

Regina playfully smacked Emma, " I am *not* a haughty know it all... and did you just compare me to the Grinch?"

Emma arched a brow and grinned, " Says the woman fluent in at least six languages and insisted that our three year old daughters needed to understand political value of chess and decided that the robes given to you in Polis were the equivalent of potato sacks with holes cut in them? Oh and let's not forget the time her big evil plan was a giant playground for the children of Storybrooke because their old playground might have given them a splinter"

Regina growled, " Miss Swan, you are skating on thin ice" Emma chuckled and darted briefly out of smacking range.

Cat grinned, "There's no need to blow a gasket Your Majesty. Honestly, I think being compared to a reformed evil queen is quite the compliment"

Regina relaxed marginally, and sniffed with a false air of indifference that had both Cat and Emma smirking at her, " I suppose we are similar in some ways"

Cat accepted the underhanded compliment graciously and Emma elbowed Regina who sighed, and changed the subject, "So who prepared breakfast?"

Cat laughed, " I certainly didn't. I can't prepare a salad without nearly losing a finger. I placed an order with a bistro downtown, paid them handsomely to risk working today... I figured an army of

Heroes would need a solid breakfast, and the least National City and I could do was ensure they were fed properly”

Regina nodded her thanks, “ Well it smells wonderful, and oh look Emma, there’s half a dozen bear claws for you to stuff your face with” she teased.

Kara was standing over the box and grinned bashfully, “ You like those too? I.. uh...”

Kara blushed and Regina smirked, “ Ate the other half dozen?” She elbowed Emma, “ Looks like I’m not the only one with a twin in National City Emma”

Emma smirked as she sauntered over to the box and swiped one, “ At least I own it”

Regina laughed, amazed at how easily she and Emma slipped back into that familiar light banter now that the air had been cleared. She hadn’t had a moment like this with Emma since discovering the truth about Lexa and Raven. A sadness and distance had fallen between her and the blonde and most of the teasing moments between them had been lost to their grief. And even the brief moments of laughter had been overshadowed by the growing distance between them. It felt incredible to be able to tease Emma now and not see a hint of insecurity and fear in the blonde’s eyes, just that fire that she had always associated with the blonde, and the warm affection that Emma’s presence always brought.

Emma caught her watching her and winked slyly from across the room. Regina turned away with a smile, embarrassed that such a simple gesture could cause so much heat to rise in her cheeks. Cat sat beside Regina, seemingly eager to get to know Regina, “ So I hear you are the town mayor? What’s that like?”

Regina chuckled at the woman’s eagerness, “ A bit like running a multi billion dollar company I suppose, though I would hazard to say running a normal town is probably a bit easier than your job.”

“ Yes, although I would imagine that the magical, fairytale element must complicate things a bit”

Regina nodded, “ yes, Emma and I have taken to referring to each new disaster as the monster of the week”

“ Why? Does it usually entail monsters?”

Regina sighed, “ Literal monsters, occasionally, mostly figurative ones.. Which is far more complex”

Emma nodded her agreement as she took her seat on Regina’s left side, “ I miss the days of simply having a giant or two to handle”

Regina frowned, “ Be careful what you wish for Emma, the last thing we need right now is a handful of giants waiting for us in Storybrooke”

Cat’s eyes widened, “ Wait, you two are serious? You’ve dealt with real giants?”

Regina laughed, “ and trolls...”

“Don’t forget the Chernabog we fried with the barrier spell” Emma chimed in helpfully and Cat frowned, “ What the hell is a chernabog?”

Regina chuckled, “Funny you mention hell, it’s a truly hideous looking demon”

Cat’s eyebrows met her hairline and Emma smirked, “ That was an intense day...”

Regina nodded, “Honestly, the three headed dog in underworld Storybrooke was more terrifying”

Lena heard her as she entered the room with her mother, “ Wait, you guys have been to the underworld? Really?”

Regina nodded, “ It was... one of our more unusual adventures”

Zelena shuddered, “ If I never see that place again, it’d be too soon”

Regina glanced at her sister, knowing the reminder of their trip to the underworld brought up painful memories. Her sister gave her a nod,

“ I’m fine Regina. I’ve moved on with my life”

Regina let it go, knowing nothing good came of forcing her sister to talk before she was ready.

Breakfast passed far too quickly and soon everyone was being ushered to their roles for the morning. Emma and Regina soon found themselves on the roof of the DEO watching as rockets were set up on the roofs of skyscrapers across the city through binoculars. Lena was on the DEO roof barking orders at her staff, Raven and Winn were working furiously to make last minute calculations and corrections. Lexa and Clarke had left a few moments ago with another team led by Alex. Kara and the three former FBI agents were at Catco with Cat Grant.

Emma squeezed Regina’s hand lightly, “Stop worrying, this will work”

“ And if everyone gets sick because it does work?”

“ Then we handle it”

Regina glanced at the watch J’onn gave her this morning, “ It’s about to start”

Emma nodded, her expression grim as her gaze flitted to Regina’s.

Regina was fascinated by this side of Emma. She glanced at the strong woman next to her, and tried to hide her admiration. Emma was battle ready. Her expression was fierce, her eyes narrowed and focused. Emma’s stance was not tense, her shoulders were loose, her posture straight, her eyes watchful and alert. Emma’s magic was firmly entwined with her own, as it always was whenever they faced danger. It was an odd sensation, having the ferocity of Emma Swan running through her own veins, but at the same time, it was oddly comforting. Because their magic worked seamlessly with the other, they moved together, completely in sync. Regina could feel Emma’s emotions as if they were her own. She could feel the connection build the longer they both concentrated on the task at hand.

Regina allowed a small smile to tug at her lips as her mind easily

recalled their many battles together. Ever since their first battle together, when Emma decided that Regina deserved to live and expressed that she believed in her. The moment Emma grasped her arm while watching Regina fail to open the portal with Jefferson's hat, their magic had been linked. Regina had suspected, from that very moment, the momentous role Emma would play in her life. The first thing she had done, after successfully absorbing a death curse in order to save the blonde and her mother, had been to seek out Rumplestiltskin, demanding answers. The man had staunchly refused to answer her.

Looking back, Regina realized the man had been afraid of the connection they shared. He had sought to keep them at each other's throats, divided, not realizing that over and over again, his attempts and manipulations drove them together, rather than apart.

Regina had no doubt that Emma was her true love. Her words to the blonde the night before resonated in her heart. Emma Swan, the woman destined to destroy her, had partially succeeded. She had steadily destroyed the power that the darkness had held over her for well over thirty years, rescuing the woman trapped behind walls, buried beneath years of broken promises, and layers of hurt the people in her life had compounded over and over again. Emma was the first person to look at her and see beneath the mask Regina had worn, the very first person to believe in her. The person who had steadily encouraged their young son to do the same.

Even when Regina was her cruelest to the blonde, during that first year, Emma had never backed down. She challenged Regina, kept her on her toes, demanded that she rediscover the person Emma knew she had been, encouraged her to believe that Regina could find that young woman filled with kindness, hopes and dreams once more.

Every attempt made by a villain or some form of darkness, no matter how powerful or conniving, had failed to divide them in the end. In the end, she always found herself in this exact position, standing shoulder to shoulder with a woman who should hate her but instead steadily believed in her, protected and defended her. Emma's belief in her steadily drew out the best in Regina. She didn't make Regina better, she made her want to be better.

The blonde tossed her a light smile, " You're thinking too hard, I can

hear you”

Regina nodded, “ Sorry dear, got lost in memory lane for a moment there”

Emma squeezed her hand again, “ I do too. All the time”

Regina glanced at her watch once more and noticed Raven toss a thumbs up. Lena barked into the radio, “ Wave one in T-minus one minute”

Regina straightened, her posture ramrod straight, her mind focusing easily on the task at hand. Reaching out with her magic, she could sense Lexa and Raven’s magic instantly respond. Raven tossed her a glance and nodded firmly. Regina searched for her sister next, felt the answering magic nearly knock her off her feet. Emma glared at the skyscraper Zelena was currently on and glared as she caught Regina as she tripped, “ Z. not the time to be messing around” she growled into her earpiece.

Zelena apologized, “ I’m sorry, I am still getting used to letting you guys tap into my magic. I didn’t mean to knock you over Reggie, I promise”

Regina arched a brow at the nickname but said nothing. Emma frowned, “ So your sister gets away with calling you Reggie, but if I call you Gina you get mad?”

“ You know better Em-ma, Zelena does not”

Emma’s mouth twitched as she fought to contain her smirk, “ Whatever you say, Reggie”

Regina glared at her but was immediately distracted by Lena counting down from ten. They all tensed as the rockets fired up, preparing to launch into the sky. Dawn was just beginning to peak over the horizon, the darkness of the night giving way to lighter colors that became more rich as the sun slowly rose.

“ Three, two, One... and fire”

Dozens of rockets suddenly fired, leaving a trail of smoke as they

made for the atmosphere. Everyone glanced at the catco building to see Kara take off as well, monitoring the rockets progress. She would be the first to notice additional solar radiation, as her powers would strengthen if the plan was working.

A moment later, a series of explosions caused the sky to explode into a kaleidoscope of colors. Regina's brow furrowed as a sharp smell she usually associated with thunderstorms suddenly appeared. Emma nudged her, " That's normal. The rockets are splitting atoms in the atmosphere, the smell comes from the nitrogen atoms. There's very few things powerful enough to actually split a nitrogen atom. Lightning, and the type of explosions we are setting off"

Regina stared at Emma, her brows furrowing in surprise, " You continue to surprise me Miss Swan. I didn't know you were a science nerd"

Emma laughed, "Seriously, my love for Star Trek never gave that away?"

" That's pseudoscience, science fiction Miss Swan."

" Some of it, yes. But much of it is rooted in actual scientific theory."

Regina arched an eyebrow and Lena glanced at them briefly with a smile, " She's right. That is what the smell is."

Lena returned her attention to the tablet in her hands, watching the data closely. Regina glanced over her shoulder, " How are you obtaining that data?"

Lena grinned, " We coordinated with different countries to send drones equipped with sensors to specific locations worldwide so we can monitor the exact levels of solar radiation everywhere at once. Supergirl is carrying a few sensors as well. So we can monitor both the levels here, and it's effect on her specifically. J'onn has them too. His people are used to much higher levels of solar radiation, because the magnetic field is considerably weaker there. Between that and the much higher levels of carbon dioxide in their thin atmosphere, it's doubtful that it will have any harmful effects on him, but we are monitoring him closely to be safe. Most aliens here agreed to be

monitored and use any strengthened abilities to help their human neighbors”

Regina nodded, “ It’s amazing how willing they are to assist, given their persecution lately”

Lena nodded solemnly, “ This is their home. Most aliens here are refugees. They’ve traveled across the stars to seek safety here. Most believe it’s their responsibility to teach humans how to be more accepting of those that are different. It certainly didn’t hurt that the President reached out to the alien community and asked them for their help. She has quite a bit of pull there.”

Lena glanced at the levels again as the second wave exploded, hanging the color of the sky again. Regina watched colors flit across the sky in awe. Emma grinned, “ It looks like an Aurora Borealis.”

Lena nodded seriously, “ That’s exactly what it is. You normally wouldn’t see it this far south, but because of the violent changes we are causing in the atmosphere, people across the globe are going to be seeing this for weeks.”

Regina nodded, “ So the explosions are causing it?”

Emma nodded, “ The presence of different elements and molecules in the atmosphere, cause the color changes in the sky. The Aurora Borealis itself is caused by electrons slamming into the upper levels of the atmosphere. Between the explosions themselves and the disruption to the atmosphere’s particular cocktail of molecules, that’s why we are seeing the unique colors you wouldn’t ordinarily see with an Aurora event.”

Regina chuckled at Emma’s excited explanation, and the way Lena grinned in agreement even as she carefully monitored the growing hole in the atmosphere.

Winn frowned, “ Our windows a bit tighter than initially anticipated Lena. we may need to launch a few aerosol rockets now”

“ We haven’t finished launching the rift rockets yet.”

He nodded grimly, I know, but they're getting too much above the

equator right now. If it keeps rising at current levels, we will hit the danger threshold ten minutes earlier than anticipated.”

Lena cursed and barked orders into her radio, “ Are the aerosol rockets ready to fire?”

Everyone confirmed and Lena glanced at Winn, “ Will one wave correct it?”

He typed furiously, his brow furrowed, “ Yes... It should slow it down. We will have to use the magical barrier to give us time to get another wave in place to fully correct the process though”

Lena glanced at Emma and Regina. Regina nodded and tapped her earpiece, “ Our services will be needed in...”

She glances at Lena, “ Ten minutes”

Regina repeated the information and everyone confirmed they would be ready. Emma tangled her fingers with Regina’s and Regina immediately felt her magic respond to the physical contact. Emma’s magic thrummed through her system and their collective magic that had been dormant in her system now began to build. Building up enough energy to cast the spell of the magnitude they were about to attempt was a taxing process. Emma gently tugged Regina away from the noise and they both closed their eyes and focused on preparing for their part of the plan. With her eyes closed, her connection to the other magic users throughout the city strengthened. Their magic became stronger, more potent. The air around them crackled as the power built and the rough circle they made collectively in their carefully chosen positions contained the power.

With her eyes closed and her attention now focused Regina could now see Zelena and Abby on one skyscraper, Lexa and Clarke just beyond. Raven was now on the fourth tower, using Monica to help ground her as she called upon her own magic. While Monica was unable to access magic the way those from Storybrooke could, she was an empath, and her knowledge and experience practicing varying forms of wicca and other earth and energy based religions did allow her to tap into the latent energies of the universe and in her own unique way access and utilize energy.

Regina knew that Dana had conferenced in the Dragon and magic users across the globe who were now tapping into the same latent energy and preparing to cast the spell. It was literally, and quite necessarily a global effort. Even so, it would exhaust them all.

The last wave of rockets launched and Lena gently tapped Regina's shoulder, " Your turn." Regina nodded and gave the order for everyone to cast the spell in five minutes. That gave time for the casters around the world, including Maleficent and Lily back in storybrooke to receive the order and cast simultaneously so no one caster contributed too much to the spell. Any miscalculations on a spell of this magnitude could be deadly.

Emma nodded firmly to Regina when the time came, a hint of a smile tugging at her lips, " together"

Regina grinned, " Always" as they turned and cast their magic skyward.

Lena paused momentarily as the electricity in the air crackled took shape, blasting heat and light skyward. She gaped at the obvious and unprecedented power her new friends were displaying. Winn nudged her after a moment, "Lena, they're waiting for orders"

She nodded firmly, tearing her eyes away and ordering her small army to launch the aerosol rockets. " Fire at will until none remain, get them in the sky as fast as possible, our friends won't be able to hold this shield for long " She barked before tearing out her earpiece and motioning the medical team forward.

Regina could hear them rustling behind her and Emma, preparing for the moment the spell became either too much for them, or unnecessary. Either way, their magic would be completely depleted in a few minutes.

It was already taking it's toll. Her hands were beginning to tremble, her legs becoming weaker and unsteady. Emma's magic reached out for her instinctively when her strength began to fail, giving her a short burst of power. Emma herself looked like she could keep going. Regina glanced at her in surprise, her voice wavering as she asked, " How are you not feeling it yet?"

Emma laughed, “ Oh, I am. I just have a larger reservoir I’m pulling from.”

Emma glanced at Regina and frowned, “ You’re growing pale.”

Regina could see spots at the corner of her vision and Emma switched from dual casting at the sky to one handed before concentrating. Regina felt Emma’s magic shift, conjuring something from some distance away. Suddenly a familiar staff appeared in Emma’s hand which she promptly handed to the brunette, “Use this”

Regina immediately recognized the staff as the one that Lexa had gifted her in Polis. It looked more ornate now and Regina realized Emma had made a few tweaks to the staff. The crystal at it’s head was larger, as was the staff itself, so it would hold the larger crystals weight. She took it from Emma carefully and immediately the spots at the corners of her vision cleared and her strength returned.

Emma nodded, “ You should have been using that from the start. Cast with one hand, channel the crystal.” Emma focused once more and Regina smiled when she heard her family members mumble their thanks when similar crystals appeared around their necks. Emma simply responded, “ Should have done that from the get go, sorry guys” Regina shook her head, again amazed at the ease with which Emma used magic now. The blonde was impressive in her knowledge and practice. She had obviously become very comfortable with her abilities during her time as the Dark One, and her knowledge rivaled Regina’s own. Emma was a powerful force to be reckoned with, and Regina suspected, Emma had actually surpassed Regina in skill and knowledge.

Regina’s strength returned, and her magic responded to her demands with more vigor. She could still feel the drain on her magic, but the costs of the spell were significantly reduced now that the crystal bore the brunt, and reduced the speed that her magic had been draining.

Regina glanced at Emma, relieved that Emma had conjured her own necklace as well.

Emma winked at her, “ Better?”

Regina nodded, “ Much, thank you.”

Emma smiled, “ It will still exhaust us, but we will all last a little longer now.”

She glanced at Lena behind them and furrowed her brow in concentration once more. A litany of herbal ingredients appeared suddenly and Lena jumped as they dropped to the ground in front of her. A piece of parchment fluttered to the ground and Emma instructed her to pick it up, “ follow the instructions, we are all going to need those ready when we finish this. Your mother will need one as well.”

Lena nodded seriously, grabbed the ingredients and the vials and headed for the command tent on the roof, “ How long do I have?”

Emma glanced at Regina, “ Maybe ten minutes. Even with the Onyx taking some of the strain, our magic is being depleted at unprecedented rate.”

Lena nodded, her expression serious, “ I’ll get it done”

Regina maintained her focus, doing her best to stay calm as her magic depleted rapidly. The constant noise from rockets shooting for the sky was beginning to grate on her nerves and she knew that was the first sign of overexertion, irritability. She was anxious, exhausted and her legs were beginning to tremble. She felt much life she had after the rough trip to Polis a few weeks ago through the mirror. Her body was protesting loudly and even the Onyx and Emma’s magic were not going to be enough to keep her feet under her for much longer. Emma shot her worried glances and Regina noticed with concern that Emma was slowly becoming pale. It was clear Emma was tiring more slowly than her, but still, it was clearly taking a toll.

Within moments, the spots in her vision were back, her vision began to swim and blur and she was leaning heavily on the staff for support. Emma’s voice sounded further away and Regina realized she was swaying on her feet.

A cheer went up when Winn announced that not only was the damage they had caused to the atmosphere was now repaired, but

the massive holes in the ozone layer were fully repaired. “ you can drop the shield now”

Regina felt two arms wrap around her from behind and cushion her fall, Emma groaning in her ear when they hit the ground together. She fought to remain conscious when Emma stated tersely, “ Roll call”

One by one, her family sounded off, everyone sounding exhausted and weak. She felt the cold lip of a vial pressed to her lips, Emma softly commanding, “ Drink this, then you can sleep, I promise”

Regina forced her throat to swallow the bitter liquid before giving herself over to the overwhelming urge to sleep as Emma murmured in her ear.

“Emma, come quick!”

The white haired woman came into the room swiftly, battle ready and tense until she realized that her family was in no danger. Regina immediately apologized, “ Sorry dear, I didn’t mean to alarm you”

Emma waved away her concern, the harsh lines in her face softening as she realized why she had been called into the room. Her twins were standing on either side of Regina, their tiny hands grasping onto her arms as their legs wobbled dangerously under them as they attempted to grow used to their own weight. This was the first time they had stood alone, with nothing more than their own strength to keep them upright. Regina relaxed when Emma’s familiar grin lit up her harsh features.

When Emma first became the Dark One, Regina had worried that all opportunities to see the familiar Emma again had been lost, but seeing her now, lowering herself to the floor, cooing at the two little girls, urging them to come to her assuaged Regina’s fears. Emma was still a force to be reckoned with, and absolutely terrifying at times when the darkness took hold, but since they had come to this land and lived in this peaceful little meadow, Regina would occasionally be gifted with the old Emma peaking through. The larger their little family became, and the more they settled into their new lives, the more often those little moments visited.

She gasped with Emma as Alexandria stepped away from Regina first, her chubby little arms reaching for Emma as she slowly picked up each foot and awkwardly put it back down again. She lost her balance and fell, frowned and pushed herself back up on little arms until she was standing again, and stumbled the last few steps to her blonde mothers arms. Emma was watching her with rapt attention as Lexa chattered excitedly as she reached her mother. Regina glanced at little Ravenna who was watching her sister with intense concentration. Seconds later, Ravenna decided to brave the distance.

Her steps were more careful and measured and Regina smirked, “ She watched to see how Lexa did it” Raven stumbled once but she easily kept her feet under her and righted her balance before falling. Alexandria giggled and clapped her hands, encouraging her sister along. Regina glanced at Emma and felt her throat constrict when she noticed the tears tracking down the blonde’s face. Emma met her gaze and Regina’s own eyes watered as Emma whispered, “ I always wondered... what it was like...”

Regina nodded, understanding the grief and wonder in Emma’s hushed voice, “ I’m sorry.”

Emma shook her head, “ Don’t be. He was happy, healthy... everything I wanted for him, he had, thanks to you. Besides... you gave me those memories... It’s just...”

“ Not the same as experiencing it firsthand?”

Emma nodded, “ Yeah, this is entirely different” she smiled at the two twins and praised them as Ravenna reached her blonde mother, grinning widely. “ well done chiquitas, now, go to nomon”

Alexandria immediately bobbed her little head and headed back for her mother, her posture now straighter as she mimicked Ravenna’s movements. Ravenna easily caught up to her sister and took her hand, chattering something unintelligible and returning her sister’s smile as they worked their way back across the small distance between their two mothers together.

Emma smiled, “ What do you think they are saying, when they chatter like that?”

Regina shook her head with a grin, “ I don’t know. I’ve read that many twins create their own secret language to talk with each other”

Emma frowned briefly, “ Aren’t they a little young to create a language?”

Regina shrugged, “ Who knows. Our little girls are far from ordinary. They are already learning three languages rather rapidly. I imagine they have a vocabulary far beyond what most eight month olds possess.”

Emma’s eyes followed the twins progress, the joy and peace evident in her features as she murmured, “ They really are remarkable, aren’t they?” she glanced at Regina, “ Thank you for calling me, I... I’m glad I didn’t miss this”

Regina smiled warmly, “ Of course my love, I am glad as well. It... means more, when you have someone to share it with”

She glanced around and frowned, “ Where’s Henry?”

Emma gave her a soft smile, “ He’s out checking his traps. I’m keeping an eye on him”

Regina arched a brow, “ Your magic allows you to do that?”

Emma smirked, “ My magic lets me do a lot of things. I can’t... see him per se, but I can sense him location. If he gets into trouble, I’ll know”

Regina nodded, “ As long as he’s safe”

Ravenna and Lexa had grown bored while their mothers talked and were now seated, talking in gibberish animatedly. Ravenna traced patterns on the ground with her finger and gestured with her free hand and Alexandria nodded along like she understood her sister perfectly and Regina chuckled, “ Why do I get the feeling they are plotting something devious?”

Emma grinned, “ They probably are, we are going to have to keep a closer eye on them now that they’ve worked out how to walk around on two legs”

“ Oh lord, If they're anything like their brother, there’s a lot of things we need to move out of climbing range”

Emma nodded seriously as she smoothly stood to her feet, “ I’m on it ai snogon”

Regina smiled at the endearing tone Emma’s voice took. She watched the blonde leave the room as quietly as she had come, still in awe over how graceful and fluid her movements were as the Dark One. she appeared to glide more than she walked. Emma tossed a smile over her shoulder, “ You are staring again ai Haipiana”

Regina blushed as Emma chuckled.

Awareness returned to Regina slowly. She knew she was back in the DEO’s hospital wing the second she sucked in a breath of sterile air. Her whole body ached, though the back of her right hand throbbed more acutely. She groggily opened her eyes and groaned and immediately saw Emma shift in the uncomfortable chair beside her. The blonde smiled wearily, “ Hey you. You’ve been out for a while. How do you feel?”

Regina snorted, “ Like I absorbed a death curse”

Emma nodded, gently pressing a vial into Regina’s hands, “ Here. Try this”

Regina furrowed her brow, “ What is this?”

Emma smirked, “ Trust me Gina. It’s not a sleeping curse”

“Ha ha, very funny Miss Swan” She muttered as she struggled to pop the cork.

Emma chuckled and popped it for her before handing it back, “ Drink up.”

“ You still haven’t answered the question”

Emma laughed, “ It’s a restoration potion Gina. It will help alleviate the side effects of the spell and speed up the recovery time”

Regina nodded and tossed the potion back, grimacing as she fought

her gag reflex and forced the potion down. Emma chuckled at her expression, “ Sorry, It’s not pleasant I know”

Regina felt the potion begin working immediately and arched a brow at her partner, “ Your potions have improved”

Emma grinned, “ Packs a punch doesn’t it?”

Regina nodded and tried to call on her magic. She frowned when it sparked to life briefly before promptly dying out. Emma shook her head, “ We are gonna be magicless for a day or two. The restoration potions help as far as making sure we don’t pass out, but our magic has to return on it’s own”

Regina fought the panic she felt at realizing she was defenseless for a few days. Emma, as usual sensed her trepidation and squeezed her hand gently, “ It’s fine Regina. I’m doing everything I can to speed up the process. Henry, my parents and everyone in Storybrooke are fine.”

“ Did it work?” Regina asked cautiously and Emma nodded, “ Yes, the rockets and the spell did their job. We got a little too close to the danger threshold for comfort in a few places, but our spell prevented any real damage. About ten percent of the world population experienced radiation sickness, but we were prepared for that. And the vaccine crisis is over. In the last few hours, those who were sick but not on death's door have recovered. Obviously there was still some loss of life, but by and large... we prevented catastrophe Regina.”

Regina nodded, her heartbreaking for those who lost family and friends to CSM’s plot. Emma looked tense and angry and Regina glanced at her, “ Hey... we did our best... we stopped him”

Emma shook her head “ Not yet, he’s still AWOL. and...”

Regina felt her heart clench in fear at the dark expression on Emma’s face. It took her only a second to work out why, “ No...”

Emma nodded, her eyes flashing with rage, “ They’ve developed symptoms... Monica is the worst off right now... hers is advancing far

more rapidly than it should”

Regina sat up, grasping Emma’s hand tightly as she fought past the nausea and lightheadedness that hit her at the movement, “ Where is she... can we do anything?”

Emma swallowed, “ Raven, Abby, Clarke and Lena are working on it. The president has sent for several specialists, they should be here tomorrow. but... at the rate Monica’s is advancing... she doesn’t have a lot of time”

Regina frowned, “ What about magic, will that do anything?”

Emma shook her head, “ It’s like he accounted for that. Any attempt we make to heal her of cancer will only make it advance faster. She’s already stage three”

Regina groaned in frustration, “ It’s one thing after another”

Emma nodded and Regina watched the blonde carefully. She easily recognized the expression on Emma’s face. She was working on a plan, and judging from the careful way Emma was controlling her facial expressions as she debated her options, she was considering something morally questionable.

“Emma...” Regina warned and the blonde flashed her a quick, pained smile, “ It’s okay Regina... I’m not going to do anything... rash”

Regina caught Emma’s twisting hands in her own and tugged her into a hug, “ We will figure out how to save them. I promise. Don’t go doing anything stupid. We don’t have our magic, and that makes everyone more vulnerable. We have to be careful...”

Emma nodded, “ It’s driving me nuts, being forced to sit on my hands and do nothing”

“ You can be a friend, be there for her, for Lena, that is something Emma”

Emma sighed heavily, “ I know.. But I still feel useless”

“So did I, when you were shot and I couldn’t heal you. Our daughter

reminded me that sometimes, what someone really needs is to know they are not alone”

Emma nodded, “ You’re right...”

The blonde sighed and leaned into Regina. “ I hate this. I hate that the Dark One consistently tries to destroy the people I care about. When I was the Dark One... I was able to control it, keep it from hurting anyone I cared about”

“ But it nearly destroyed you in the process Emma”

“ As long as the people I cared about were safe, anything I went through was worth it”

Regina frowned at the blonde’s words, a small fear trying to make itself known. She tried to tug the thread, pull the fear to the surface, but it vanished when Emma pressed a kiss to her temple. “ We will figure it out, we always do. I just hate seeing people I care about suffering”

Regina nodded and let it go. “ How long do I have to be hooked up to this thing?”

Dana entered quietly, her face betraying her exhaustion, “ You completely depleted your magic, and your body pulled from everything else to sustain you. Your electrolytes are low, your immune system took a hit... you are under supervision for at least another day or two. Don’t try to walk without assistance for at least another twenty four hours”

Regina realized for the first time that Emma was also hooked up to an IV. she glanced again at the blonde, “ How come you aren’t on bedrest as well?”

Emma shrugged, “ I was until yesterday... I am just recovering a bit faster than the rest of you”

Regina frowned, “ How?”

Emma swallowed, “ I’ve completely depleted my magic several times, my body knows how to respond and recovers more quickly.”

“ Yesterday? How long was I out?”

Dana replied softly, “ Two days, but from what Emma told me to expect, that’s normal. You are going to feel like you’ve been run over repeatedly for a few days yet. Take it slow. You too Emma. just because you can stand now, doesn’t mean you should.”

Emma mock saluted the redhead, “ Roger that doc.”

Dana managed a tired smile and Emma gently patted the woman’s shoulder, “ How’s she holding up?”

Dana shook her head, “ She’s stronger than I was. Still... it’s... taking a toll... on all of us”

Emma nodded seriously, “ We will figure something out. This family always does. We are not losing any of you to this”

Emma gave Dana a once over, “ How are you? How are you even working right now?”

Dana shrugged, “ I’ve been on death’s door a few times. Cancer doesn’t terrify me like it used to. I’m more afraid of losing her, and Lena before...”

Regina spoke up gently, “ You will have your chance Dana. you still have time”

“ Not much” Dana argued, fighting back the tears threatening to fall.

“ We won’t lose her Dana. none of us are going to die. I will do whatever it takes.”

Regina stared at the ferocity on Emma’s face, an uneasy feeling settling in the pit of her stomach. She had the unsettling sense that things were about to get significantly messier in the next few days.

16. William

Notes for the Chapter:

Warnings for this chapter:

I switch from Monica's perspective to Dana's halfway through the chapter, and when switching from our core brave enough folks to our newer additions, that may be the case for a bit because it gets us back to our well known characters much faster than dedicating a whole chapter to each individual. let me know if that shift is too abrupt or you want me to resume the previous format.

from here on out, things get messy.

typical warnings apply here, plot twists galore, guaranteed to hit ya in the feels, and for those who are NOT familiar with the rich lore of the X files universe... Hang on tight, and read a bit more slowly from here.

I have to say though, I am extremely pleased with how well the X files weaves both with Supergirl and Once, and yes, even the 100 universe... but if you are going to catch the significance of it all... you may want to take your time reading. It took a whole week to get this chapter right, and while the next chapter is well underway, I am going to stick to my uploading a chapter a week schedule from here on out. that gives me plenty of time to get each chapter right. so expect the next update to be next Friday by 8pm EST

Monica ached from head to toe. Her veins felt as if they were on fire, her eyes were dry and throbbing, her tongue felt like heavy cotton in her mouth. The slight breeze from sterile air circulating in her room set her nerves ablaze.

But Monica was grateful. Grateful for her daughter's soft hands cradling her own. The comfort her daughter offered made the sharp painful sensations her touch brought well worth it. It was a sharp

reminder that she was still alive, still here. That she still had some time, if not much to tell the people she loved just how dear to her they truly were.

Her daughter staunchly refused to talk to her, even as she offered her presence as comfort. And Monica understood. To Lena, she was that little four year old girl, watching her mother leave her all over again, feeling both powerless to stop it, and terrified of being left alone.

Monica knew better than to offer her daughter weak platitudes and promises she had little illusion she could keep. She was dying. The only saving grace was knowing Lena would not be left alone. She had a family who had sworn to care for her as their own. She had friends, and she had Kara.

The blonde sat beside Lena, fingers tangled with Lena's her soft worried gaze watching them both closely. Monica nearly smiled at the nervous way Kara fidgeted, obviously sitting still was hard for her. She was a woman of action, who preferred to fight battles with action, with her fists. Sitting beside her closest friend, holding still and watching them both suffer in stubborn silence was clearly driving her mad.

Dana's presence offered little comfort. The redhead was fighting to hide how much this was hurting her. She spoke rarely, and when she did, her voice was low, as if she was trying to speak around a throat full of gravel.

She was weakening as the illness advanced in her own body, but Dana refused to lie in bed. She fussed over Monica and Lena, alternating between hovering over them as the medical team and the two Griffins worked, and darting out of the room to check on the latest panel results. It was clearly taking its toll on her, the deep circles under her eyes noticeably darker each time she reappeared.

Late evening on the third day, Lexa and Clarke wheeled their mothers into the Reye's room for a visit. Emma immediately ignored Lena's weak protest and tugged the younger woman into her arms and held her tightly as Lena promptly broke down and sobbed. Regina ordered Lexa to leave her next to Monica and grasped the brunette's hand tightly in her own, warm brown eyes filled with tears.

Monica's shaky control over her own emotions faltered at the gesture, and soon, she was sobbing too, Regina squeezing her hand and promising to not let go. Lexa and Clarke held onto the stone faced Kryptonian superhero in the corner, the only outward sign that Kara's ferocious hug was causing discomfort was a momentary grimace from Lexa.

That's how Mulder found them over two hours later. Clinging to each other, with dry eyes and damp shirts stained with salty tears. He stared for a moment, clearly uncomfortable and outnumbered.

He met Monica's gaze and stated softly, "A word Monica?"

She swallowed. Mulder had never once addressed her by her first name before. She nodded and he hesitated, "Alone?"

Emma stiffened first, her eyes narrowing with distrust. Lena tensed in her arms, glancing at Monica, her gaze pleading for Monica to not turn her away.

Monica bit her lip and glanced at Regina, "Do you mind?"

The brunette studied Mulder coolly before nodding her agreement, "We will be right outside"

Monica met Mulder's gaze, "Emma and Lena stay"

Mulder frowned and Regina paused, before clearing her throat and softly ordering everyone from the room. She stood beside Mulder for a moment, giving him a sharp look before glancing at Emma and Lena, "I'm just outside if you need me."

Emma nodded and Monica nearly smiled at the look Emma directed at her love. It was clear they were having a silent conversation. Regina shot one more distrustful look at Mulder before stepping outside and gently closing the door behind her after Mulder stepped fully inside.

He stared at his hands for a long moment before glancing up to meet Monica's gaze.

"You know why I am here"

She bit her lip and watched Emma shift out of the corner of her eye. She met Mulder's gaze steadily. She had always known this day would come. The showdown between her and Fox Mulder had been a long time coming. She sighed, "I can't help you Mulder"

"No, but William can"

She said nothing, tossing a firm glance at her daughter and Emma, *stay out of it*. Emma nodded, and Lena's eyes narrowed. Her daughter was far too intelligent for her own good.

Mulder stepped closer, and sank into the chair Regina had vacated, "Monica... look. I know... I know you hate me"

She opened her mouth and he laughed, waving her off, "And it's not like I don't deserve a degree of your anger. I know you blame me, for leaving Dana. for leaving William. I know you blame me for Dana losing him in the end"

Monica's jaw ticked in anger, "I loved him too Mulder."

He nodded, "I'm sure you did"

Emma growled at his easy dismissive tone and he turned to shoot a glare at her. He turns back to Monica, "I really need to speak to you alone. It's paramount that we do"

Monica stiffened and moved to sit up. Lena rushed to her mother's side, fussing over her, lifting her into a more comfortable position while shooting sideways glares at Mulder.

When Lena started to retreat towards Emma, Monica caught her hand, urging Lena to sit beside her mother on the narrow bed. Lena complied gratefully and Emma shifted her own chair closer.

Mulder sighed, "You can't make things easy for me can you?"

"Like you made things for Dana?" He flinched at the accusation and his eyes narrowed at Monica's usage of Scully's first name. Monica arched a brow and waited.

He huffed in irritation, "Fine, we'll do it your way"

He hesitated a moment longer, "I know you blame me... and that's okay. You aren't wrong. I did fail them both. It was an incredibly selfish and cowardly thing for me to do. But when Dana suggested I should run, I genuinely thought it was the best way to keep them both safe. We both know... I wasn't ready for that. I wasn't ready for the responsibility of being a father. I wasn't ready to give my life that I had just recovered up again for a child I met once. So I took the coward's way out. I took Dana up on her offer, and I ran. And I regretted it the moment I left. I've regretted it every moment since."

Monica didn't say anything. Her anger burned in her heart against a man who never appreciated what he had in Dana, in his son William.

He sighed, " I knew I could leave. I knew, that I could tuck tail and run, and that Dana would be safe. I knew you and John would protect them. I... suspected... that you had feelings for Dana and to be perfectly honest, I felt it was okay to leave them behind because I knew you would step into my place."

He ran his fingers over his scruffy face, his expression tired, " It took years for Dana to open up to me, but you swooped in and broke through her defenses from the very first time you met. By the time I was saved, you were already inseparable. You had already cemented your place in her life, in her heart. And I... I was on the outside looking in." He paused trying to get the bitterness in his voice under control again, "So yes. I ran. But that doesn't mean I stopped caring about her, or William."

Monica sighed, " Mulder, there was a time where I would have admired your ability to make a case your sole focus. I know it's something Dana admired about you." He started to speak but she raised her hand, " I let you say your piece, have the decency to let me say mine"

He nodded and gestured for her to continue. She glanced around the room and gave him a sad smile, " You've never had this, have you? Well, actually you did. Before your sister vanished. But ever since that night, the entirety of your attention and dedication has been devoted to your cause. It has always come first for you. Above your job at the FBI, above your family, your friends, above Dana and even your own child."

He started to protest but after a sharp look from Emma, he squirmed in his seat but remained silent as Monica continued, “ You have to admit, the only time Dana has ever come first for you is when it occurred to you that you could lose her.”

He sighed, his eyes softening as he nodded, “ You’re not wrong”

“ No I am not. I know you care for her Mulder, and you care for your son, but they deserve to be put first, above your job, and most certainly above this quest of yours. You’ve entwined your life, your entire sense of worth into this pursuit and it’s nearly cost you everything, multiple times. And yet, somehow, Dana is still here, still by your side, fighting for you, fighting with you. But Dana is not you. She has a family. She has friends, she has a life outside of this quest of yours. So does your son. And as a man who cares for her, as a father, it is your duty to lay aside your quest, and protect the people you care about before they end up as collateral damage”

“ That’s how you see yourself, isn’t it?” He asks, a hint of bitterness in his tone, “ Their protector?”

She gave him a hard look, “ Someone had to fill your shoes when you left. Someone had to be her confidant, her friend and ally. Yes it is how I see myself. But don’t think for a second that I ever forgot that I was filling your shoes”

He nodded, his expression morphing into one of regret, “You are right, It’s my job, and I am trying to do it. I know the quest has been the hinge my world has turned on. I know it’s nearly cost me everything, several times, but... I am trying, to do right by them now, to save Dana”

“ And what happens when she’s saved Mulder? And how far are you willing to go? You keep pushing this, keep putting them in danger to have to save them all over again. How many more times can you do this to her. Eventually, she will tire of it. What happens then?”

He sighed heavily, “ Monica... I have no illusions that I can be a good father, and any pipe dreams I may have had about Dana and I building a life together have shattered. But I still love her, and I have to save her. She doesn’t deserve this. She has this cancer because of

me. It's my fault. I have to make it right"

" And let your son pay the price instead?" She asks, the anger seeping back into her voice. He arches his eyebrows and hesitates, but she interrupts him swiftly, her eyes narrowed, " I know what you want Mulder. And the answer is no"

His tone took on that pleading note that always made Dana concede, to hell with the consequences, but it never worked on Monica. It made her despise him all the more, for recognizing Dana's weakness in regards to him and wielding as a tool against her. He was used to getting what he wanted and Monica would not allow him to manipulate her as well.

" You know it's the only way to save her"

She sat straight up and glared at him, " Don't you dare pretend that you are doing this for anyone other than yourself. You know damned well she wouldn't want it, not for her and certainly not for him. She gave him up to keep him safe. She would never ask this of me and you know it"

He nods, " You are right, and I am selfish, but for once Monica, I am trying to save her. You are right, she deserves better than me. She deserves to live, and he can save her"

" She wants him safe. I swore..."

" And yet, you know exactly where he is, don't you?" He pushed, " You joined CSM so you could use his resources to locate him and monitor him. I bet you've even made contact with him"

Monica glanced at Emma who was vibrating with rage and tried to shoot her a warning glance. Emma ignored her, clamping a hand on Mulder's arm as he reached for Monica, twisting it away from her before he could make contact, "She's been nothing but clear on the matter" Emma growled in his ear, " You would do well to respect her answer, if not hers, Dana's wishes, if there is even a scrap of a respectable man left in you, you will let this go"

He trembled under the force of Emma's dark rage. He bit his lip and

carefully pulled out of her grasp, “ He can save her life and you know it. He can save all of us, Dana, me, you... your daughter”

His eyes glint as he realizes he has leverage to get Monica to do what he wants but Lena stands hastily raising her hand rather forcefully before he can even attempt to wield Lena’s life as a weapon of manipulation, “ Absolutely not. If I am piecing even half of this together correctly, I do not want a teenage boy’s life to be leveraged for mine. And the fact that you would even consider doing so, especially since he is your own son, is absolutely disgusting”

Lena advanced on him, her eyes flashing dangerously, “ You are weak. In fact, you are no better than CSM himself, whom you claim to hate with every fiber of your being, and yet, here you sit, ready to sell out your own son so you can live. You have become the monster you sought to stop”

Mulder visibly flinched at those words, pausing for a moment before whispering under his breath, “ he is what he sought” Monica furrowed her brow at the absolutely stricken look on Mulder’s face.

Monica groaned as she reached for her daughter and Lena rejoined her immediately, fussing over Monica as she pushed herself to the edge of the bed and planted her feet on the ground firmly.

“ She’s right Mulder. What you are suggesting is no different than what CSM did to you, to your sister, to his own son. You’ve become the very monster you fear. And I will not allow you to continue to destroy the people I love for the sake of your quest, no matter how noble you believe it to be. At some point, it’s not noble anymore. It’s foolish and the worst kind of selfishness.”

He seemed to recover from whatever demon he was facing in his own mind enough to glance at her and plead, “Monica... Dana’s dying” The genuine anxiety and grief in his gaze didn’t move her, not because she wasn’t terrified over Dana’s fate, or her daughter’s, or her own even. It didn’t move her because she had known Mulder long enough to know that his fear of losing Dana was not driven by love for her, but fear, of being left alone. He did not love Dana. He did not respect her or appreciate her. He needed her. He relied on her, used her, as he used everyone who made themselves available for his

endless quest for the truth.

“Dying or not, Dana gave William up to protect him, and unlike you, honoring her wishes is my first priority, quests for truth be damned. Now, if you’re finished, Get. out.” She hissed through gritted teeth.

He hesitated to comply and Emma grabbed him gruffly, shoving him out the door barking something at Lexa and Clarke before gesturing a very concerned Regina back into the room.

Regina carefully closed the door behind her and turned to face Monica. Lena held her mother’s hand tightly, trying to conceal how disturbed she was by their encounter with Mulder.

Monica sucked in a shaky breath before meeting stormy green eyes, “Emma....”

The blonde nodded immediately, her gaze full of fiery determination, “ I’m on it.”

Monica glanced at Regina, “ Go with her... please. He’s going to be puzzled... as to why I am not the one coming for him.” She hesitates, and removes the small gold chain necklace from her neck, pressing it into Regina’s hands. “ Tell him... it’s time to come home”

Lena glanced at her mother confused, “ But you said....”

She shook her head, fighting back tears. “ Mulder has forced my hand and he knew he was doing it too. If I don’t bring him in, Mulder will. And if Dana, Mulder or myself go to him, CSM will find him first. I meant what I said. We will not use him to save ourselves. I couldn’t live with myself if we did. I won’t allow it. But he needs to be safe”

There was a soft knock on the door and Kara ducked her head in, “ Um....” she scratched her neck nervously, “ You guys... might want to come see this”

Regina frowned, “ What now?”

Kara bit her lip, glancing past everyone in the room to meet Monica’s gaze, “ There’s... well... you see...”

Regina shook her head in exasperation, “Spit it out already”

“ Some teenage kid named William? He... uh... he’s here. And... he claims that he’s Dana’s kid... and... he’s asking for you Monica”

Alarm shot through Monica’s system, “ Where is he now?”

“ In a room, with Dana. Mulder busted in there for a moment but was..told to leave by William I think and Clarke and Lexa dragged him off to put him in a cell next to Lillian to keep him from doing anything stupid. He seemed... kind of unstable all the sudden”

Lena’s brow furrowed, “ Lillian? My mother is here? In a cell?” her brow arched into her hairline and Monica flinched, both because of the way Lena still called that woman her mother, and the fact that she was at least partially responsible for Lillian being detained.

Lena reached for her birth mother’s hand and squeezed, smiling weakly as she explained, “ Just make sure they can’t talk to each other.... I don’t trust Mulder’s intentions anymore than I trust Lillian’s””Monica sighed, “ He’s not like CSM. He’s just. Desperate”

Lena arched her brow, “and from what I’ve seen, a desperate Mulder is a dangerous one. He has a single minded focus, saving Dana. he’s already demonstrated a willingness to compromise his values for that end. And that makes him incredibly vulnerable to her manipulation. The last thing we need is Mulder running off to join Cadmus, thinking it will save Agent Scully”

Monica swallowed, “ You are absolutely right”

She glanced at Regina, “ Help me?”

The brunette nodded, the barest hint of a compassionate smile tugging at her lips as she moved to help Monica stand on shaky legs. Monica soon found Emma on her other side and her daughter hovering, needlessly fussing over her, urging them to be careful as she was gently transferred to a wheelchair. Regina promptly collapsed into her own wheelchair with an exhausted sigh as soon as the transfer was completed.

Emma leaned heavily on the back of Regina's wheelchair and followed an anxious Lena down the hall as she insisted on being the one to push her mother. Kara led the way, babbling, "He just showed up a few minutes ago, with Kal- El of all people. Apparently he's been under Kal- El's care for a while. William didn't say much, just that he sensed his family was in danger and needed his help. He insisted on speaking with Dana, and he specifically requested you..."

That gave Monica pause. "Me"

She squeaked and Kara gave her a kind smile, "You are his godmom, are you not?"

She nodded numbly, "Technically, that's true"

"Well he spoke with J'onn and myself telepathically, and according to him, in his mind, you and Dana are equally his mother's. And Emma is his aunt?"

Kara's brow furrowed in confusion and Emma chuckled, "Yes, I suppose I am, of sorts."

Lena grinned, "I have another brother? Wait... isn't William...?"

"Mulder's son? Yes" Monica stated softly. She struggled to keep her contempt for the man out of her voice but everyone heard it and from the looks on the faces around her they shared the sentiment. She found herself outside the same conference room where she and Dana had confessed their feelings for each other. Monica swallowed nervously. She hadn't seen William face to face in a couple years. Not since his adoptive parents had died in a suspicious car wreck.

She panicked the second she heard the news. She had kept tabs on the growing young boy for years, careful to leave no traces of any surveillance for CSM to find. She was exceedingly careful. She shouldn't even now where he was, and a part of her felt immensely guilty that she knew about his well being while Scully, his own mother did not. It had been a large part of the reason she pulled away from Dana. Everytime she saw the redhead, the truth threatened to come tumbling out. The only way to keep

them both safe, was to keep them from each other. To protect them and love them both from afar, no matter how much pain it caused her personally to do so

She had called Emma in, and the blonde immediately had agreed to manipulate the system to ensure he was placed in another safe home and his identity was shielded, this time, he stayed with a well to do family in Metropolis, and a young Clarke Kent himself promised to safeguard the boy. The last time she had seen him he was barely seven years old and it had been the first time he called her mum. She had cried, insisting that was a title she didn't deserve.

He had placed his small hand against her cheek and gave her a soft smile, his eyes betraying a wisdom far beyond his relatively few years. " I remember you. I remember my mother, and I remember you."

She shook her head, crying, " That's not possible"

He actually laughed at her, his laughter carrying that same tinkling note that Dana's did before he recounted a story she had never told him, " I was kidnapped. And I didn't fully understand everything going on. But I remember the ship responding to me, to my cries for help. I remember fire, things falling all around me, and screams. And I remember my mother calling for me" tears tracked down her cheeks as she stared at him in amazement, " How?"

He brushed her tears away. " You and mom found me. It was always like that. Whenever I needed to be saved, you were there with her, protecting us both, I knew I was safe and that you loved me as much as she did. I remember it all. Calling you anything less than my mum... feels... wrong"

" It feels wrong for me to get to hear that, and not her" the fact that she was confiding this to a seven year old boy was not lost on her. She didn't understand how any of this was possible or made sense.

He nodded his young face full of tenderness and longing, " I know. I..."

He hesitates and she squeezes his hand gently, " I know. I miss her too" god how she missed her.

He takes a deep breath, " I will see you both again. Not yet... but when

the time is right... I will come to you"

She shook her head as her heart clenched in fear, " The only way to keep you safe is to keep you away from us William. There are still people trying to hurt you. She misses you, terribly, but more than that, more than anything, she needs to know you are safe."

" I know. And one day... you will need me to save you, the way you and mom have saved me"

" No William, I can't..."

He gave her a soft smile that broke her heart, " It's not really up to you, is it? Or any of us for that matter. There are some things, that once they are set into motion, cannot be stopped or reversed. And it's okay. It gives me peace, knowing I will see her again, see you again"

She frowned at him, " Sometimes..."

" You wonder where I gained this knowledge and wisdom. That's not for you to know or understand Mum. It's not something that can be understood. But please, don't let that frighten you. Let it bring you comfort instead. I know we will meet again. And when we do, everything wrong will be made right"

She is startled by his ability to accurately perceive precisely what she is thinking. He simply smiled at her, " It's alright. I will be okay. No harm will come to me. Nor will I allow harm to come to you when the time comes."

She hesitated outside the door and glanced at Lena and Kara who hovered beside her, " Help me stand?"She asked nervously. Her daughter managed a weak smile before gently working an arm around her mother to lift her. Kara easily lifts her alone and Lena smiled gratefully. She knows her daughter is hiding the signs of her own illness in an attempt to mitigate Monica's concern. Monica gently wrapped her daughter in her arms, holding her close for a long moment before tangling her fingers with Lena's, making it clear that she wanted Lena present. Everyone else backed away intent on

providing some privacy. She nodded to them gratefully before gently pushing the door open and stepping inside.

Dana had been conferring with Dr. Griffin on a more aggressive treatment plan to tackle the cancer when the young boy suddenly touched down on the balcony with light feet. His sudden arrival was greeted with the immediate drawing of at least a dozen DEO's agents weapons, lasers pointed at his chest as he stood there calmly. She had caught the movement from the corner of her eye and had gasped, her legs immediately giving out from under her as she cried out, " Don't shoot him. Please. That's my son!"

He had waved his hand dismissively, the weapons wrenching from the agent's' grasp and unloading themselves before gently floating to the ground.

He raised his hands calmly, " I've come to help. I mean no one here any harm"

Abby carefully lifted Dana to her feet, keeping an arm securely locked around the redhead's waist as she was still trembling from the shock. Tears filled her eyes, making it impossible to see the young boy clearly but even so, it was impossible to not see the resemblance he bore to her and mulder. She reached for him with trembling hands and he smiled warmly at her as he approached cautiously.

The DEO agents watched him warily as he stepped directly in front of Dana, "Hello mother."

She meant to greet him in return, but instead she let out a keening cry full of grief and joy as her fifteen year old boy wrapped her in a hug for the first time. Over his shoulder she watched Superman touch down lightly, repeating her son's behavior of lightly dismissing the concern of the DEO agents, " He is who he says he is. He's been under my care since he was little."

Abby and Alex surrounded her, shielding their intimate family reunion from view, " Agent Scully, let's move you guys somewhere more comfortable" Alex stated gently.

Dana heard the edge in her voice and wondered briefly why Alex was acting so protective but dismissed it in favor of marveling at her lanky teenage son giving her a smile that betrayed his joy.

The second they were in the conference room, Alex nodded sharply, "I'm right outside if you need me" before softly closing the door. Dana turned back to her son, holding him still gently, "let me look at you."

He nodded and stood perfectly still as she regarded him carefully. His hair was lighter than Mulders, with flecks of her own red, his brows were thick like Mulders, and he had Mulder's nose and chin but her sharp blue eyes. His mouth twitched in an attempt to control the grin that clearly wanted to display itself. He was lanky and tall, well built and strong. His stance belied his confidence and strength, his eyes hinting at a maturity far beyond that of a normal teenager. He had one scar, a long thin line that ran from under his left eye to his chin. It was faded and old, she wouldn't have noticed it if she hadn't been scrutinizing him.

"Satisfied?" his voice was deeper than she expected it to be, but still held the awkwardness of an adolescent in the throes of puberty. She nodded, swallowing, blinking furiously to keep more tears from falling, "You are really here? How?"

He nodded, "It's really me. And it was time."

"Time?" she repeated, her brows furrowing in confusion. The door behind them slammed open before he could answer.

She found herself gently but firmly pushed aside, his arm guiding her behind him protectively as none other than Mulder blazed into the room before abruptly pulling up short, "So it's true, you really are here"

Dana was confused by the obvious tension in her son's shoulders, the clenched fists he held at his sides, the barely contained anger in his voice, "What do you want?"

Mulder flinched at the anger in his son's voice, his expression softening, "It's really you? You probably don't remember me

William, but I am your father, Fox Mulder”

“ I know exactly who you are. What do you want?”

Mulder ignored their son’s question and his anger, stepping more confidently into the room, his eyes alight with curiosity, “ You were an infant the last time I saw you. I only ever got to hold you the once.” His voice had softened considerably but her son’s posture became more rigid, and William doggedly continued to sidestep so that he was firmly planted between Fox and Dana. She placed a gentle hand on her son’s shoulder, “ He’s your father William. He’s not dangerous...”

Her son laughed harshly, her son’s vocal cords producing a sound that sent ice through her veins, “ He may have helped create me, but he is not my father”

Mulder frowned, “ Come on now. That’s hardly fair”

William arched a brow, “ You left her, even after I told you to stay”

Mulder froze and swallowed, “ So that was you?”

Dana stepped around her son in time to catch the ironic smirk on her son’s face, “ You already knew that. And yet, you ignored my warnings, and you left her anyway. Even after all those times I visited you, spoke to you, told you everything you needed to know. Not only did you fail to end this, but you’ve dragged mom through the muck with you. And then, when we needed you most, you abandoned us. My mum had to protect us. She had to fill your shoes and try to repair the damage done by you”

Mulder scoffed, “ Your mum.... Monica? Really? You won’t acknowledge your own father, but you defend and even claim *her* ?”

“ She was there, when I needed her, when Mom needed her, where were you?”

“ In New Mexico, Trying to end this. All of it. So we could be a family again.” Mulder glared at his son before sighing, “ So why are you here now William?”

William arched his brow at his birth father, “ You know exactly why”

Mulder shook his head, “ I was coming to talk to your mother when I heard you were here. I was just about to come find you.”

William dismissed him with anger blazing in his sharp blue eyes, “No need, unlike you, I know when I am needed and I don’t hesitate to do what is necessary to protect the people I care about”

Mulder huffed, “ William, come on. First Agent Reyes, now you. You think I’ve been chasing down every lead for my own personal gain? I was trying to stop the man behind this, the man who has torn our family apart”

William smirked, “ You mean your father? CSM, Spender or whatever the hell he calls himself. I’ve been telling you for years that you had all the pieces, all you had to do was stop and see”

Mulder frowned, “ You’ve been telling me.... Wait.. that little boy I’ve been seeing in my dreams.. Building the spaceship on the beach... that was *you* ?”

William arched a brow at Mulder, “ you never figured that out?”

“ I thought it was me... with my parents. Those visions started long before Scully was even pregnant, before my kidnapping. How’s that possible?”

William arched a brow at him, “ You have all the pieces, and yet, you still refuse to see.”

Lexa and Clarke burst into the room and easily wrestle a protesting Mulder into cuffs before dragging him from the room. Dana turned to her son in alarm, “ What was that about? Why are they arresting him?”

Her son sighed heavily, “ Mother, have a seat. I will explain it all to you in due time. But first things first”

She followed his instructions and sat down in an office chair, him easily sliding into a seat across from her. The grace with which he moved provided a sharp contradiction to the awkwardness of his

gangly limbs. He smiled when he caught her staring at him with a furrowed brow, “ I’ve always moved like this mom.”

She met his gaze and wasn’t sure how to feel about the mirth dancing in his eyes. “ You can read my thoughts?”

He nodded, “ Something like that. As you well know, I am... uniquely gifted. Given the company you’ve been keeping recently, it really shouldn’t surprise you as much as it does”

She shook her head, “ Yes, I suppose, but Jeffrey Spender....”

“Gave me an injection to temporarily limit my abilities to that of a normal human child. He was attempting to save my life, eliminate his father’s interest in me, and shield me from detection from the aliens who would seek to use me for their own ends. My abilities returned the moment puberty began. Luckily, mum and Emma predicted as much and ensured I would have a mentor to guide me.”

Her mind latched onto one word with confusion, “Mum?”

He gave her a light hearted grin that masked excitement and Dana heard the door behind them open, “ Ah, here she is now.”

Dana turned around to see Monica stepping into the room, leaning heavily on her daughter and Emma Swan for support.

William stood swiftly, easily transferring Monica’s weight from Lena to himself as he guided her to a chair, “ Easy now mum. You really are too weak to be up and about right now” His tone was that of warm affection and gentle chastisement. Dana wasn’t even conscious of the fact that Lena had sat down in the chair on the other side of her mother and Emma had gently ruffled her son’s hair with playful affection before retreating from the room as quietly as she had come.

“Mum?” Dana repeated numbly, her eyes filling with tears as the sharp pang of betrayal shot through her system when Monica’s guilty gaze met her own. “ She’s... mum?”

William placed a restraining hand on her arm, “ Peace mother, let me explain”

Dana was startled by the authority in her son's voice as well as the calm that invaded her senses when he spoke. She nodded wordlessly and he knelt for a moment before Monica as Dana watched. He took the brunette's hands in hers and sighed heavily before murmuring, "You are more sick than I anticipated, but there is still time to fix this." he swiveled on his heels and regarded his mother coolly, "You gave me up when I was little more than a year old. By the age of seven, most children lose their earliest memories. I however, still have them all"

She stared at him, unable to comprehend what she was hearing. He sighed, lifted his hand to his mother's cheek and closed his eyes.

Dana gasped as she saw herself through infant William's eyes. She saw the very first time their eyes met, a unnamed but incredibly familiar comforting presence passing him into his mother's arms after leaving the safety of her womb, hovering over her shoulder as Dana smiled through her tears at her little child.that same presence checking in frequently, sending them to the hospital, escorting them home. He let her hear Her singing to him in the car through his little ears, her holding him close and whispering nonsense while he cried. Her crying out for him amongst fiery rubble. Her staring at him with a mixture of fear and wonder while he stared at the triangle levitating above his bed.

It took her a moment to recognize the other presence that frequently witnessed these moments. Since little William hadn't been able to see far enough to identify the individual and the voice was sometimes garbled by distance. As he grew older his vision became stronger, and his hearing cleared and he easily identified the woman his mother called Monica who was never far away. She was there over Dana's shoulder, and when he sensed his mother's fear the strongest, Monica's calming presence provided a strong counterbalance. He recalled the same warmth and affection being directed at him from the brunette as from his mother. And when he first learned the word mom, his mind naturally connected both of them to that word. He understood from an early age, that they shielded him, cared for him, loved and cherished him.

Now, in an attempt to help Dana understand, He showed Dana his memories of Monica, first with her, and then the moments where Monica doted on him while caring for him in his birth mother's absence. He showed her every single time Monica saved them both, shielded them both,

let her feel how comforted and loved he felt in her presence as well as his mother's. He let her see the moment they both faded from view as a stranger gathered him into her arms and carried him away. He showed her the moment Monica reappeared in his life, whisking him to safety when his adopted parents were killed, the tears in her eyes and she was left behind once more.

Dana wept, her eyes closed as the memories cascaded over her. Now she understood, and her initial bitterness over Monica being on the receiving end of her son's love faded. *Mum* was right. *Mum* was fitting. It honored the monumental role Monica played in her son's life, long after Dana herself was forced to step away without discounting or minimizing Dana's sacrifices. Her eyes opened slowly and she met her son's warm gaze with a trembling smile before glancing behind him, meeting warm chestnut eyes watching apprehensively, "Mum it is" she whispered and her son grinned, squeezing his mother's knee in thanks as he rose to his feet lightly, "Now that that's settled, let's get down to business shall we?"

Dana reached for Monica, and the brunette sucked in a sharp breath when Dana slid her fingers across the back of Monica's hand before threading their fingers together. Dana met her son's gaze while she moved closer to the brunette beside her, "William, not that I am not absolutely thrilled to see you, but why are you here? I sent you away to protect you and it's still too dangerous"

"It's as I told mum. It's time. It's hard to explain how I know that or what that means exactly, but... I've sensed this day coming for as long as I can remember. When I awoke this morning, I could feel it. The world had changed, and it was time for me to come home, to save you. All of you"

Dana frowned, "William, you can't"

He shook his head firmly, "I can and I will save you. It's why I am here. They intended for this to happen, all of it. You may not see it, but it's all connected. Your friends, the dangers they have faced, your quest for the truth, Father's obsession with finding the truth, CSM's plot. It's all connected"

Monica cleared her throat, "How?"

William studied her for a moment smiling, “ You’ve sensed it as well, haven’t you mum. Your gift, your ability to connect with the universe, the way it guides you, you’ve sensed it was leading you here”

She nodded and Dana stared at her, “ Sensed what?”

William glanced at the door, “There are others who should hear this. It involves them as well”

Monica swallowed, “ Emma and Regina”

He grinned, “Yes Aunt Emma, and Regina, the first two of a very long line of saviors. A line I belong to”

Dana gasped, “What? How?”

William gave her a gentle smile, “ All will be explained in due time” he reached the door and nodded to Alex just outside, “Could you send Emma and Regina in please?”

Alex studied him for a long moment before conceding to his request. He closed the door and circled the large table in the center of the room. Dana watched her son move, puzzled by the ageless wisdom with which he carried himself, the easy, graceful surety of every move he made, the smooth confidence with which he spoke. She glanced at Monica and as usual where Dana was fearful, Monica exuded a calm that puzzled her. Her gaze was sharp and scrutinizing as well, but driven by her insatiable curiosity, rather than fear. It was something Dana had always envied about Monica, her ability to bypass her fear and simply trust, to simply seek understanding.

While Dana studied Monica, William watched Lena with more than mild curiosity. He eventually stuck out his hand, “ William Scully-Reyes. You must be Lena Luthor-Reyes”

Dana froze at the easy sure way her son combined her last name with Monica’s. Lena gave William an ironic smile as she regarded him carefully. She took his hand cautiously, “ From what I hear... you are my brother, of sorts”

He laughed lightly, “ Yes, I suppose I am, if you don’t mind sharing

mum, that is”

Lena gave him a nod as she leaned into Monica, “ I have grown quite attached to her in the short time I’ve known her, but, so long as you don’t take her from me, I imagine we can share” Lena’s lips quirked as she fought back a small smile.

He nodded, a satisfied smirk working its way across his features. Dana watched their interaction with interest and Lena blushed as she glanced at Dana, “ Does that make you...?”

Dana waved her off gently, “ I won’t make you call me mom or anything. Emma has more connection to you than I do. but... “ She glanced at Monica, “ If you and your mother are willing, I... would like to at least attempt to return the favor.” She cleared her throat nervously before meeting Monica’s gaze shyly, “ I would like to get to know you both better, be in your lives again, if I can”

Monica took a deep breath and nodded, “ I have no qualms with that.”

William paced until the door opened again and he smiled warmly at the two women entering the room, “ Aunt Emma, Regina, please have a seat”

Regina gave him a smile as she swept into the room, “ You can’t be much older than our Henry”

He chuckled, “ Technically, Henry is a great deal older than me, but if you are referring to the fact that he still appears to be fourteen, you would be correct”

Regina glanced at Dana, her brow arched. Dana shook her head with a smile. It was going to take a while to adjust to the fact that her fifteen year old son spoke with the wisdom of an older adult.

He clapped his hands together, “ Good, now everyone is here. Now we can discuss what’s about to happen.”

Everyone turned to him and Emma asked, “ So what exactly is your plan William?”

He turned to her, his expression becoming serious and grim, “ I am going to heal everyone’s cancer, and then... “

He hesitated for a moment before continuing, his eyes losing their laughter and light as he stated with a calm that made his mother shudder, “ And then, I am going to destroy the Dark One”

Notes for the Chapter:

as some have noticed, I've done a considerable amount of research for this story, both delving into the complicated lores of all four shows, as well as delving into the even more complicated wibbly wobbly, timey wimey science required to make this all work together... honestly, it's been challenging, but an absolute blast (I am learning a lot in the process). if you guys are NOT fans of the x files, but want to see where I drew a lot of my material, let me know. I will happily post a list of must see x file episodes and sites where you can further explore the lore in the BE prompts. I must warn you though, the show is addicting ;-)
without further ado, let the comments begin ;-)

17. A Line of Saviors

Notes for the Chapter:

Warning: plot twists ahead

This chapter is where we really see all four of these universes collide. I used elements from all four shows that are genuinely present in the show, and weaved them into this story, so regardless of which show you are most familiar with, you will see elements of it tied into this one, massive plot twist. so while it feels like a series of plot twists, its actually one.

without further ado, enjoy

Emma stared at the young man with mild amusement. Everyone else was in a panic, his mother's pleading with him, Regina urging him to think this through. Lena and Emma were silent, while Lena appeared concerned, she out of everyone know the least about the Dark One, and Emma... well, Emma was another story entirely.

Emma let them clamor for his attention for another moment before raising her hand and stating with authority, " Quiet"

Regina glanced at her in obvious concern but Emma was looking at William, her brow arched, " I assume you have a plan?"

"Emma, you can't seriously be considering this" Regina warned.

Emma's tone remained authoritative, and she knew her tone was causing Regina concern, but it was the only way to regain control over the situation before they descended into panic" I'm not considering it. Neither is he. There's nothing to consider. He has to do this. This is why he's here. Did you miss that part? What about him screams that he is an ordinary child to you?"

Emma almost apologized for the harshness in her voice, but she knew Regina struggled with understanding the fact that sometimes, children were asked to do things that adults struggled to do. While her heart went out to the boy, she also understood that he was right. He was the only one who could do what needed to be done. She

needed everyone in the room to understand that fact, before she could explain that there was no way in hell she would let him do it alone.

Regina swallowed and turned to evaluate the young teen. Emma watched him cautiously, and William seemed fine with the scrutiny directed at him. The boy carried a confidence that most would mistake for teenage arrogance, but Emma knew better. William was an ageless soul trapped in a teenager's body. He was no child, despite his unassuming appearance.

He glanced around the room before he spoke to Emma alone, "I know you've foreseen it. You know why I am here. You know this is what I must do"

Emma nodded once, feeling her heart well with compassion for this young boy who was barely older than Henry. "Destroying the Dark One and it's power is a heavy burden for you to bear."

He sighed, nodding his agreement, "And it a burden you never should have borne. They made a mistake, unleashing that on mankind. They thought they could control it themselves, they never intended for it to fall into human hands..." he glanced at his mother and paused, unsure of how to continue without contributing further to her pain and fear.

Both Dana and Monica were watching William with a growing degree of fear and a hint of distrust. Emma sensed that the young boy's intentions were pure, but she knew, from many conversations with Monica, that Dana had long feared her son was not truly her own, that he had been created for a nefarious purpose, and in many ways, her fears were now being realized. Sighing, she placed a comforting hand on Dana's shoulder, hoping to convey that she both understood her fears and that she would support this family, no matter what it took. It's who she is, a savior, whether she wants to be or not. She has as much say in her own destiny as William does in his, which is to say, absolutely none.

William himself stood ramrod straight, his posture betraying his easy confidence. He refused to acknowledge anyone other than Emma. Emma alone understood why. He saw her as both a mentor and an

equal. He recognized her strength and authority as the savior. He spoke to her gently, “ You were the first, the first who harnessed it, who successfully wielded the darkness, who could actually control it.”

Emma shook her head, “ Barely. It nearly destroyed me as well, several times. Are you sure this is a task you can handle?” a faint smile tugged at William’s lips signalling that he understood she was really asking was whether or not he was prepared to do whatever it took to complete his task. It felt as if they were having two conversations, one for the benefit of those in the room with them, the other a silent conversation that discussed through eye contact and subtle shifts in body language what the others could neither comprehend nor handle. This was beyond them, and the silent conversation accomplished what it needed to while shielding the others from unnecessary fear and pain.

He nodded firmly, “ I am sure I can wield it. I can control it, I was created for that purpose alone.”

Emma’s eyes narrowed, “ How? What exactly are you?”

He smiled, “ I know you sense the truth Emma. you know I am unique. There isn’t another being on this planet, in this realm or any other quite like me, though you and your family come the closest. I am not entirely human. Nor can I be simply categorized as Alien.”

Emma bit her lip, trying to contain her smirk. He was right, she had foreseen him, when she was the Dark One. The gift of foresight passed down from Rumple had allowed her to see many potential futures, and in nearly all of them, this young boy appeared, a force that the darkness feared. That gift of foresight, the ability to sense danger had remained even though the Dark One no longer coursed through her veins. She took a deep breath and stepped forward offering her hand, “ May I?”

Something flashed in his eyes as he hesitated for a moment but nodded his assent, and she took his hand firmly in her own. She arched a brow at him as raw power immediately coursed through her veins. His magic was both light and dark, and it was tied directly to his life. Something about it was incredibly familiar, she recognized it

but couldn't immediately place it. She could sense that he spoke the truth, he was alien, and he was human. He wielded power the Dark One could only dream of. His power was what it craved and feared most, as it had hers, but as she suspected, he was far stronger than she had ever been, even at her strongest.

He stared at their joined hands, clearly debating whether or not to allow her to continue accessing his power. For her part, She didn't let go, she met his gaze head on, and she sensed the moment he agreed that she had a right to know.

Emma nodded sharply and closed her eyes, and ignored the tension in the room while maintaining her connection with Willaim through their joined hands as he showed her what she needed to know.

Images flashed in Emma's brain, and prior to her time as a dark one, she wouldn't have been able to process the flurry of images William fired at her. An ancient alien race landing on a primitive earth, spreading the very first life forms, single celled organisms that would evolve over millions of years. A mistake made, and a new life form unleashed on the planet, spreading like cancer. A virus that infected its host, changed it's physiology, making it alien. Those who survived the process became like their creators. Those who did not, perished. The first humans encountered the virus forty five thousand years ago. The virus mutated to survive earth's harsh conditions, many variations of the same virus springing up. One in particular mutated in a way the aliens did not predict, and were powerless to stop once it began. The only saving grace, the only hope they had, was that because humans were exposed to it so early in their existence, certain bloodlines would evolve to be able to resist it. Certain bloodlines would evolve to develop power of their own, and in time, they could use these individuals to correct their mistake and eradicate the virus once and for all.

Her visions shifted to something far more familiar. She saw herself, standing before the swirling darkness, Regina trapped within. She stared at the dagger in her hand, felt the way the darkness both called and repelled her. It was afraid of her, afraid of her strength, even though it craved her

power. Her hands shook as she decided to act on her instincts. She met Regina's gaze and everything in her settled. This was right, this is what had to be done. She couldn't explain how she knew that, but she sensed the darkness feared her more than it craved her so this must be the correct course of action.

She ignored Regina's pleas, turned to her family and Hook, said what needed to be said, stepped forward, acting on instinct, thrusting her hand directly into the storm above Regina's stiff form. The darkness screamed with her, furious over her interference while equally enticed by her power. She threw every bit of her magical training and instinct to protect into grabbing hold of the darkness, using the dagger to draw it directly to her, forcing it to release Regina. It felt like fire racing through her veins. Her innate light magic attempt to repel what she was purposely drawing into herself. She sensed this was the only way, that she possessed something Regina did not, not yet.

She knew that while Regina's light magic was returning, and her heart lightening, she did not yet have the strength to not be overtaken by the darkness. If it took her now, as it intended, it had a stronger chance of beating her, of reshaping her into the twisted woman she had been. Emma on the other hand, was another matter. The darkness feared her, it didn't know the extent of her strength and that made it fight her all the more.

In a matter of seconds, every bit of the accumulated power and knowledge it possessed poured into her mind as Emma's magic forced Regina back, towards her family, away from the danger. Fighting the darkness was excruciating, and she not only felt her own pain, but the pain she was causing the sentient being as well. She screamed in agony as the darkness lifted her off the ground and yanked her from this realm, dragging her to the enchanted forest, hoping it would gain more control over in the process. It would soon learn, It had grossly underestimated Emma Swan.

William released her gently, steadying her as her vision returned to normal “ You may want to sit down. Allow me to explain, please”

Everyone nodded and Emma sat down numbly, Regina reaching out to steady her, her unique magic sliding into Emma's system, blending effortlessly with her own, restoring her balance. Emma still trembled

from the excess energy coursing through her veins. Regina's thumb traced circles across her knuckles, soothing them both.

He nodded to everyone in the room sharply, "Emma knows this already, but what you call the Darkness, is what my mother calls Purity, or the black oil. As Emma has come to suspect in recent years, It is actually a sentient Alien life form, albeit rather primitive form. It first arrived on earth well over forty five thousand years ago. The particular strain those from the enchanted forest are most familiar with, the form that overtakes a host and bends it to their will is a mutation of the version my mothers are more familiar with from this realm. The form you were exposed to Emma is one particular being. The first of it's kind. Every other realm's dark one, is a direct descendant of the original. You Emma Swan were the first to not fully fall beneath it's control. Your physiology, and your light magic largely protected you from the effects of the virus. It craved your power but feared you. That is why it was torn between claiming you or Regina as a host, the same magic runs through you both, though it was and is considerably stronger in Emma."

Regina glanced at Emma for confirmation of this and she nodded, allowing William to continue, "As you well know, You are not the first savior, the first individual with the correct genetic makeup to resist the influence of the darkness. You however are the first whose magic and physiology rendered the sentient darkness to a mere tool for you to wield, rather than reducing you to a vessel. It's why your appearance remained largely the same. And because Regina's magic has evolved and now mirrors your own in virtually every way, despite your differing bloodlines, your children share this trait. It is why Lexa was also able to bend the darkness and the commanders before her to her own will, rather than it controlling her."

He sighed heavily before continuing, "While I am not a direct descendent of your line, I share your genetic makeup. I was created in a lab, and when you were imprisoned Emma, a sample of your DNA was obtained. Your DNA was extracted, replicated and carefully entwined with that of my mother's, and somehow, I have been unable to determine how as of yet, Regina's was obtained as well. As a result, I am one of many, one of the savior's to rise from your line"

"Christ" Regina cursed, "How many are there?"

William shook his head, “ At this point, it is impossible to say. Enough though, to fulfill the prophecy regarding your family.”

Emma glanced at Dana who was white faced, “ So my son... is your son as well?” Dana asked. Emma could sense Dana’s fear and confusion and rushed to reassure her, shaking her head, “ We may share genetic material, but he is still very much biologically your son.”

William nodded, “ Because of the manipulation in my DNA, I am somewhat related to both Emma and Regina. I have the same magic as they do, as will any descendents of mine. Although, for the aliens who created me, it’s not really magic. It’s part of their physiology, the same way that Kryptonians physiology provides them with more power and strength under a yellow sun, or martians can share their mind with others”

Emma sat calmly, Regina’s hand in her own. She glanced around the room before meeting William’s gaze, helping guide the conversation that was only taking place so that the others could understand “ So why does the task of destroying the darkness fall to you?”

He bites his lip, “ I am the only one who can without also destroying myself. I was created specifically to be used as a weapon against the darkness. It is not only the human race that this darkness infects and controls like a plague before casually discarding them to take a more powerful host. This particular strain of the virus is unable to create it’s own form. It’s desire for power derives from it’s instinct to not have to rely on a host. As you well know, it can survive for a time without a host, but it still ultimately needs the host in order to survive. It infects a person, feeds on their life force, entwining it’s own existence with that of the host. If the individual possesses latent power or magic, it feeds on that as well, trying to gather enough to be able to mutate into it’s own physical form. It may imitate physical form for a time now, but it still needs a vessel. It carries all the knowledge and power of previous hosts with it into each new host, though it failed to obtain yours”

Emma’s brow furrowed, “ But Rumple claimed...”

“ He lied. He successfully obtained the power Killian Jones brought

to the dark one, but he failed to obtain yours, yours remained with you, and you, ironically enough, took much of it's knowledge and power with you. You are still connected to the darkness. I know you've felt it"

Emma nodded, giving Regina a brief reassuring smile when the brunette's grip on her tightened, " Yes, I still feel it. I assumed it was residual energy, left over somehow, but you are right. I can sense it..."

He chuckled, " You do far more than that Emma Swan. You still wield it. You are not the Dark One any longer, and yet you can still access and wield it as if you were. Surely you've noticed the boost in your power and stamina since the darkness left you"

" What?!" Regina barked in alarm, " So she is still the Dark One?"

He shook his head, " Technically, no. But she is also the first to successfully survive the transfer of the darkness from one host to another. She broke the rules it lives by. As a result, she still is connected with it." He returned his sharp gaze to Emma, " You can sense it. You can sense what it intends to do, in many ways you still have the foresight it provided you with"

Regina stared at her, " You said a few days ago... Lexa sensed it as well, that it was planning something, that Rumple was up to something. That's because..."

William nodded firmly, " The darkness never possessed Emma, Emma possessed the Darkness. She still does, as does your daughter."

Regina's fear was palpable and Emma wanted to reassure her. But all she could do at the moment was hold her true love's hand, send calming magic through thier connection and hope it was enough. She knew Regina would have dozens of questions to fire at her the second they were alone. She hoped William could alleviate some of Regina's fears before leaving her to deal with the fallout of these new revelations. She glanced back at the young man as Regina asked, " So how do you intend to destroy it? We had to do so through the host sacrificing themselves and even then, it wasn't enough to destroy our realm's Dark One"

He nodded, "I am the only being in existence who can destroy the darkness without it destroying me in the process. I in many ways do precisely what Emma has done, reverse the effect it has on the host, except my alien biology allows me to do so while remaining entirely immune to it's effects. I can steal it's power and knowledge and it's very life force while completely preventing it from taking mine"

Emma's brow furrowed, " How will you force it out of Rumple this time?"

He smirked, " As you likely recall, It was killing Rumple before, and it's killing him now. While it's evolved, it's still very much a parasite that feeds on it's host until there's nothing left. It's stronger since taking Hook's power, in spite of how you have hindered it. It's also stealing the power of it's descendents, consolidating it in order to survive. You have weakened it considerably, and with you continuing to draw on it's power, the Dark One's in other realms have also weakened. All I need to do is enter storybrooke with you. It will sense my presence, discover Rumple is no match for me and try to find a stronger host. It will try to attach itself to the one destined to destroy you Emma, but I will do as you did. I will force it to release him, and force it to take me as it's host instead. It will not survive the transition and without this realm's darkness, the other realm's dark ones will weaken considerably. At that point it will be a simple matter of me traversing each realm and destroying them in the same fashion"

Emma chuckled, " Simple is hardly the word I would use to describe your plan"

Regina watched them interact carefully. She turned her gaze back on William, " You said the darkness had chosen another already, one destined to destroy Emma?"

William nodded solemnly, "Gideon, I believe your family back in Storybrooke has crossed his path already, while you were in the 100 universe"

" The figure under the hood" Emma whispered, recalling the fear her father had described when he suddenly appeared after David tried to contain Regina's darker half. Given the dark expression on Regina's

face, she was recalling her counterpart's interactions with him as well. Chestnut eyes met hers with fresh concern.

“ He's strong, it won't be easy to defeat him, even without the added strength of the Dark One”

Emma shook her head, “ Based on what limited information my father was able to give, he's already a Dark One Regina. Think about it, he seems to be an incarnation of the previous dark ones. The figure under the hood. Who else had that MO?”

Regina frowned, “Nimue? But she was destroyed when Hook sacrificed himself”

Emma nodded, “ She wasn't alone either. Think about it, we didn't really defeat that, Hook unleashed it, and we didn't contain it, Rumple stole it. Even if Rumple hadn't spelled the sword to siphon that power back to him, it would have been driven out of this world, but still existed in others.”

Dana and Monica were completely lost. Emma tossed them a reassuring smile and mouthed, “ I'll explain later” to monica who nodded firmly and squeezed Dana's hand.

“ How did Gideon end up with that power then? If the curse is passed on through the death of the host” Regina asked.

William answered, “ Typically, yes, but the darkness has evolved again. It found a willing host, a host who has fully embraced it in Rumple. The second he put that potion on that sword to reclaim it for his own. Although, in truth, the moment he chose the darkness over Belle all those years ago, it was able to fully integrate itself with him. Had he chosen his love for belle, and surrendered to the power of true love, that would have saved him. But his love for power was stronger than his love for belle, and the second he made that choice, the darkness won and made it impossible for him to ever be his true self again. He only further cemented that bond when he used Excalibur to channel the darkness back to him. There no longer is a Rumplestiltskin without the Dark One, they have literally become one and the same. Choosing power over belle is what is allowing him to now pass what was once a curse as a genetic trait.”

Regina gasped, “Genetic trait, wait... Gideon?”

Emma nodded, confirming Regina’s fears, “ Gideon is Rumplestiltskin and Belle’s son. He was taken out of this realm by the black fairy, another incarnation of the dark one from another realm. I’ve crossed paths with her before. She was one of the few to escape an encounter with me.” Emma stops Regina’s obvious next question with a sigh, “ As I’ve said before, time passes differently across realms and he’s now an adult, and dark to the core. If the darkness in him dies, so does he”

William nodded, “ Is Excalibur in Storybrooke Emma?”

Emma nodded, “ Yes...” she hesitated, her brow furrowing as another piece of the puzzle fell into place, “ when it was mine... I had the sword analyzed, it was made of materials unknown to man”

Regina frowned, “ Excalibur was destroyed”

Emma shook her head, “ Unfortunately, no it wasn’t. It is indestructible. When an attempt is made to destroy it, it breaks down into particles too small to see and reassembles in another place. It’s... imbued with considerable power. It can’t be destroyed through any conventional means”

Dan gasped, “ William, the supersoldiers that hunted me... one of them was crushed in a garbage truck, but they found this metallic vertebrae in with the mangled corpse... he was able to regenerate an entirely new identical body from that one piece. Are you saying that that artefact that made Mulder sick, that vertebrae in the supersoldiers and excalibur...”

“ Come from the same material? Yes, that is precisely what I am saying. Every realm’s dark one derives it’s power from that same material, and it’s encoded with the knowledge and power of the original source”

Emma frowned, “ that means... that the tech used to create Lexa’s flame...”

“ contains the same material, yes” William stated gently. He knew

what Emma was getting at and Regina picked up on it fairly quickly too.

“ you said contains, not contained. Are you telling me that we didn't actually destroy the dark one in the 100 universe?” Regina gasped, her eyes widening in fear.

William shook his head, “Unless you used the flame of prometheus to do so, no. that flame is the only tool able to seamlessly separate or rejoin the pieces or completely destroy them. The saving grace with the 100 universe, is there's no one left alive there for it to feed on. Given time, it should starve and die out on it's own”

“ No wonder I can still sense Excalibur, the darkness is laughing at me” Emma growled in frustration

“ How long have you known this Emma?” Regina asked, her tone sharp and accusing.

William shook his head understanding Regina's fears, “ She has not attempted to find or use the sword Regina, simply sensed it's presence and power in Storybrooke.everything else has purely been conjecture on her part until I confirmed it. You are not losing her as you fear”

Regina glanced at Emma and Emma confirmed his statement with a nod, her eyes pleading with Regina to trust her“ It's true, I've only sensed it. I haven't found it. Given what we've learned today I suspect Rumple has hidden it to keep it from Gideon”

William nodded his agreement, drawing a jagged piece of metal from his pocket, covered in intricate patterns and glyphs. “My mothers will recognize this” he stated calmly as he placed it on the table before them. Dana and Monica shared a long look and Emma caught the shudder that passed through them both as the artefact began to spin on the table.

He nodded to Emma, “ Go ahead, it won't harm you”

She hesitated before placing her hand on it, effectively ending the spinning before lifting the heavy piece, tracing her fingers over the

glyphs, and shuddered when she began to hear the familiar whispers. Her eyes met Williams, “ Excalibur...”

“ Is made from the same materials that this is, yes. My mothers believed it to be a piece of the ships found here on earth. They are half right. In fact, the Holy Grail itself was imbued with the same power because they came from the same place, but it wasn’t originally from a ship. The power to heal, the power to give and take life. And like what you now hold in your hands, the Grail itself is not inherently evil. It however was corrupted by purity.”

Regina frowned, “ Excalibur can grant or take immortality, grant or deny both light and dark magic”

He nodded, pointing to the artefact, “ As Mom discovered during the course of her investigations a few years before I was born, this does the same”

Dana nodded, “ It healed an FBI agent, the rubbing of another piece of it held enough power to reactivate the alien virus in Mulder, giving him ESP, the ability to hear voices, perceive others thoughts, make predictions, among other abilities. It nearly killed him, and it gave him a nearly fatal illness.”

William nodded, “ Because while father has alien DNA, it's not nearly enough to make him capable of using this without dire consequences.”

Regina stared at the object, “ How does it work? How is it related to Excalibur?”

“ You see these edges?” he asked as he took it from Emma gently. Emma felt relieved when it was taken from her.

Regina studied it with a frown, “ It looks as if it’s been broken”

He nodded, “ You are familiar with the story of the flame of Prometheus?”

She nodded, an ironic smile tugging at her lips “ Let me guess, it’s alien”

He grinned, “ You are beginning to understand now, yes. It is alien technology. It’s the only weakness this has. It was one solid piece at one point, a long time ago. It was how the first of the alien races recorded their histories, like your neanderthals wrote on cave walls. The difference is, each mark made not only effectively stores knowledge, but it also creates and stores power, what you refer to as magic. That first race was challenged, their authority to rule over the others compromised. Fearing what would happen if their creations obtained its power, They destroyed the wall with Prometheus’ flame, broke it into pieces and scattered it across time and space. Part of it became the Holy Grail, some of it came here. Most of it is still scattered. But your race, the human race became aware of it, and its power as a result of purity.”

He twirled the artefact in his hands lightly, “ Their mistake, was underestimating their own creations, their lust for knowledge and power. They never should have kept any of the pieces in the same realms as their escaped viral creation. Purity had already evolved into a being that could think and feel. Its next mutation was to develop the ability to utilize the most powerful element in the known universe as a host in lieu of a viable sentient being. And the human race, well, they really aren’t much better”

Emma nodded, “ And it always retains part of itself within that element, in case the host should die”

William sighed, “ Exactly. So you can destroy the host, but destroying Purity itself is much harder. You have to destroy everything it ties itself to, or trap it within it and destroy it, which can only be done with Prometheus’ flame. And I am the only one who can wield this without drastic consequences”

Dana sighed, “ So Mulder was affected by the rubbing because...”

“Because he had dormant alien DNA that closely resembled that of this artefacts creators, allowing him to access a limited amount of its knowledge and power, unfortunately though, it nearly killed him, and drew a great deal of attention to him.”

Regina frowned, “ So you are human, but alien. What kind of alien?”

“ I was bioengineered as a human alien hybrid yes. I have the genetic code of that first alien race, the race all others either evolved from or were created by. My DNA also holds the entire human genome”

Emma arched a brow at him, “ Are you implying what I think you are?”

He nodded, “ I come from the first known race of aliens, known only as the Master race. They didn’t originally possess a physical form, the wall I’ve described was their first creation. That accumulated knowledge, and that stored power helped them create most of the life forms in the known universe”

Dana gasped, her hand covering her mouth, her face betraying her disbelief, “How is that possible?”

He laughed, “ Mom, I can see where you are headed with this, so let me clarify. They were the first known creators. They don’t predate the universe, but many alien races, including the human race were... created for lack of a better term, by them. And many of their creations, like myself existed before we had a physical form, which is why I was able to speak to father before I was given a biological form”

“ You were a sentient being without form, then became human and have powers?” Dana asked, her frown deepening by the minute.

Emma knew where Dana was going with that line of questioning and apparently, so did William.

“ Relax mom, I’m not Jesus” he laughed.

Monica chuckled and Dana glared at her.

Monica raised her hands defensively, “ What? It was funny, even you have to admit that your brain was going that way, given the fact that there was a bright star looking thing shining over democrat springs while you were giving birth and Mulder found you by following the light”

Monica glanced at William, “Agent Doggett told me Mulder said something about your birth implied that there may well be a god, or

higher power...”

William smirked, “ Well, you already know that most of this world’s major religions were found on a spacecraft far older than the human race. ”

“What?” Lena gasped in disbelief, “ Where? Can I see it? Can you imagine the knowledge we can obtain from something like that? How it would advance our understanding of Space?”

William chuckled, “ easy sis, one thing at a time, the first one was first spotted off the Ivory coast in West Africa. My mother took countless photos and rubbings of the craft before it vanished, only for a second craft to appear just before I was kidnapped”

Dana arched a brow at her son, “ A craft that also disappeared just before we found you among the burning rubble of the cult’s camp” she reminded him. She studied him for a moment, “ Where did that ship go?”

He shook his head, “ Some truths are not for you”. She froze at those words, staring at her son with something resembling fear.

Lena frowned, “ So it vanished to shield that knowledge from us?”

William nodded gently, “ Your race is not ready for those truths, that knowledge or that power yet. You are still a very young species. You have much to learn, and many more evolutionary changes that need to occur before you are truly ready for that knowledge. If you were to hold it now, it would only serve to destroy you”

He hesitated before approaching his mother upon sensing her distress over his gentle chastisement, gently wrapping her in a hug, “ It’s alright mom. I know this is a lot for you to absorb. I’ve thrown a great deal of knowledge at you in a very short period of time.”

Emma agreed. Her mind was buzzing with the implications of everything William had told them.

“ So let me see if I have this straight” She states, rubbing her forehead in a failing attempt to ease the growing migraine the day had brought before ticking off the summary points on her fingers, “

You are fully human and fully alien. You had a non physical form and were able to communicate with your parents and others prior to Dana becoming pregnant with you in spite of the fact that she's barren. Your DNA has the complete human genome as well as the complete genome of the very first alien race, a race responsible for the creation of most other beings in the known universe. You have powers and magic that are literally encoded in your DNA via some unknown metallic compound that holds the greatest power in the universe and you are one of the many prophesied saviors to come from mine and Regina's line. You alone can wield Excalibur, Prometheus' flame, and anything else made of this mysterious material that came from what is essentially a word wall also imbued with all the known knowledge and power of the universe. Am I missing anything?"

He smirked, " Besides the fact that my destiny is to heal those affected by CSM's plot, and destroy the dark ones and the super soldiers once and for all, all of them... No, I'd say you've pretty much covered it."

Regina stared at the teenage boy with a deep frown, " So if I'm following this right, your alien DNA comes from the first race advanced enough to create others in their image, and that same race most likely influenced the religions of virtually every realm. They gave us our religions"

He nodded.

Regina and Lena shared a meaningful glance before Lena's mouth dropped open and she blurted out, "So you're a god. Like God, god?"

Williams mouth twitched as he watched her process everything with a hint of amusement. She continued rambling, " like a full on "as flies to wanton boys, destroyer of worlds, I am the alpha and omega God-god? That doesn't seem..."

She wipes her hand across her face, but the signs of shock refused to budge from Lena's face as she whispered, "Good glorificus... You... are a god?"

She looks at Emma, and whispers" My brother is a god" She

continued shaking her head in awe, her expression betraying how completely overwhelmed she is by this revelation.

Lena glanced at him in alarm suddenly while Emma tried to contain her laughter, “ Are there others like you?” she looks around the room, her eyes wide, “ Do we have a plan for dealing with gods?”

Regina shook her head, and stated with complete sincerity, “ Not really, I’m an atheist” Emma caught the faint spark of amusement in Regina’s eyes and frowned for a second, wondering if this was intentional after all but their facial expressions made it hard to tell, even though Emma’s superpower was pinging off the charts.

Emma and Monica shared a loaded glance and burst out laughing. Dana was frowning, failing to see what was so amusing about the sudden change of direction the conversation had made

William chuckled as he crossed the room to take Lena’s hand in his own, “ Did you just?...”

Emma was trying and failing to cover her laughter, “ Quote a line from a youtube series about a couple century old piece of gothic literature? I think she did.” Emma’s sides ached and tears tracked down her face, as she wheezed in laughter, “ But you gotta admit, we were all thinking it.”

Monica placed a hand on Regina’s shoulder as she glanced at Emma, “ I’m an atheist, she said... oh my god,that couldn’t have played out any better if they planned it”

Regina’s brows arched and her mouth twitched as she waited for Monica to realize what she just said. When Monica’s own words sank in, she and Emma erupted into another fit of laughter and Regina ended up joining them, chuckling. Dana huffed in frustration.

William winked at them before turning to his sister, “ Technically, I am a culmination of everything your race knows about mine. However, I wouldn’t call myself a god, and really, neither should you. We are creators, yes, but my race cannot take credit for the creation of the cosmos. We just significantly aided in your race’s understanding of it”

Lena was still lost in absorbing everything. Finally she nodded, wiped the confusion and awe off her face and turned on her patented smirk and disaffected shrug instead, “ Whatever you say Jesus.”

He arched a brow at her and shook his head in amusement.

Regina glanced at Emma and frowned, “ Emma, stop mentally googling your favorite mythological quotes”

Emma paused and evaluated Regina before turning to Lena and scrutinizing her. “ Okay yeah, setting aside the fact that you both have incredible acting skills to say that with a straight face, that’s way too many lines stated perfectly to be a coincidence,” She smirked, “ so that was an intentional reference” she accused lightly.

Regina shrugged and shared a knowing smirk with Lena, “ You admitted it yourself, the situation called for it”

Dana sighed, “ I don’t know how you are all making obscure references and laughing about this. My son... is some massively powerful being whose destiny is to put himself directly in harm’s way to destroy other powerful beings”

Regina sighed, “ Join the club. Apparently all our children and descendants are destined to be immeasurably powerful as well”

Dana frowned at Regina and Emma raised a hand with a sigh as she stepped between them, “ it’s not a competition, so relax, both of you”

Dana huffed but turned to her son, “ What about that Iron compound in the quarry, I’ve seen it destroy supersoldiers, it won't harm you will it?”

He shook his head, “ I’m immune to that particular compound. In fact, it’s a part of me”

Dana frowned, “ So...What does that mean exactly?”

He smiled, “ It’s a part of my genetic makeup”

Lena shook her head in wonder, “ I would love a sample of your DNA for analysis”

He shook his head sadly, “ I can’t let you do that, I’m sorry”

She nodded, “ Let me guess, we aren’t ready yet”

He sighed,” It’s a bit more complex than simply not being ready. The Alien DNA you already have access to has caused enough trouble for you and your family as it is Lena. It already fell into the wrong hands and while you successfully recovered it, can you imagine the damage done if they had access to my DNA?”

Emma frowned, “ But CSM had your blood, and if he had that, he has your DNA”

“ Normally that assumption would be correct, but as I’ve explained, there’s a difference between me and most aliens” William stated.

“ How can you be sure of that?” Regina challenged, “ Pardon my frankness but CSM hardly seems like one to give that up easily”

William nodded, “ He only had the one sample and there currently isn't any technology in existence that can actually analyze my DNA. They would be able to pick out fragments, the parts of me that are human, but the rest is incomprehensible to him. The Master race made sure that only they can analyze and replicate their own DNA and rNA. No other race in existence, human nor alien has the capability to do so and they likely never will. That knowledge is guarded above all others”

Emma nodded. That made sense. Still, something bothered her. She glanced at William, her mind spinning and he nodded, “ You would be correct Emma. I knew it wouldn’t take you long to work that out”

Regina stiffened, “ Work what out?”

Emma sighed, “ The reason CSM is still alive. The reason he seems to be unkillable. While I initially attributed it to a deal with the Dark One, there’s only one explanation that actually makes sense”

Regina swallowed and shook her head, “ He made a deal with the dark one” Apparently, Regina caught something in Emma’s gaze that had her rethinking that theory, before Dana pieped up, “ Seriously, no. don’t. If you are going to say what I think you are about to say, I

can't deal with that right now. It's too much, this is all too much"

From the raw fear on Dana's face, it was clear she meant it. She had just regained her son, learned far more about him than any parent should ever have to worry about, and she needed time to process. Monica glanced at Emma, " Say what? What is she so afraid for you to confirm"

It's surprisingly Lena who speaks up, her voice soft, her brows furrowed, " Emma's right. It's the only explanation that makes sense Dr. Scully."

Dana shook her head, " It can't be"

William stood still and waited for someone to be brave enough to say it out loud.

Lena glanced around the room and her eyes met Emma's as Emma tried to comfort Regina.

Lena sighed, " I guess I will say it. Frankly, I 've suspected it since you all started speaking about them."

Monica glanced at her daughter, " Speaking about whom?"

" The dark ones mum" William answered, his tone soft.

Lena nodded, her eyes narrowing as she stated, " It would appear that CSM didn't just make a deal with the Dark One. Somehow, someway, he IS a Dark One"

Emma watched Dana in alarm as the woman's eyes suddenly rolled back into her head and her body pitched . Monica barely managed to reach over and grab her to keep Dana in her chair as the redhead blacked out.

Notes for the Chapter:

what did ya think? there are more twists coming soon and while I have slowed down to one chapter a week, I have been able to get two posts done in the prompts, so if you get bored while waiting, feel free

to check those out by clicking next work.

18. Fate

Notes for the Chapter:

so... not sure if anyone caught the not at all subtle shoutout to Carmilla in the last chapter, but in this one, there's brief mention of another one of my favorite shows. For now, that's all it will be, a shoutout, unless anyone wants me to explore the crossover more in the prompts. lemme know.

this chapter is a continuation of the previous one. it reveals a bit more of the massive plot twist that will dominate the rest of this story, but there's some Swan queen cuddling, and Swan Queen and crew family moments in there as well.

Fate is laughing at us .

That was the only thought running through Regina's mind as she watched DEO Agents rush into the room, and carefully transfer an unconscious Dana Scully to a gurney. Monica was hastily transferred back to a wheelchair and she and Lena were rushed from the room as well.

In the meantime, Regina's mind ran with her fear. For all their running, for all their fighting, for every decision they had ever made, fate had still inevitably led them here. She distinctly recalled a conversation with Emma after she had killed Cruella over 24 years ago, "*Our actions are our own, but fate pushes us.*"

Trying to give Emma a slimmer of hope, she had rather audaciously suggested that they make that day, that moment, the day they both beat fate. The irony of her rather blaise comment laid with two prophecies neither had known about. Prophecies that in and of themselves mocked the idea that any of the many obstacles they had encountered over the years could have been prevented or avoided.

"Two women bound by fate, both pure light, and pure dark, from them a new line will rise. from two saviors bound by the most powerful magic of all, a savior will rise for every realm"... "All saviors die, defeated by the villains in the end."

Fate was definitely mocking them, and it made her more fearful than angry. She had never been more aware of how little control she had over the direction of her life. There was a futility to fighting it though everything in her raged at the loss of control. She was realizing though, any control she thought she had was only an illusion. Though, oddly enough, she had evolved beyond fear for her own life. It was her family, her partner and their children she feared for. The prophecies concerning her family subsequently condemned them all to death, if the prophecy regarding the fate of saviors was anything to judge by.

Emma murmured something softly in her ear that drew her out of her own mind and back to the moment and she suddenly realized that she still had a death grip on the blonde's hand. She muttered an apology and consciously fought to loosen her grip. Emma simply nodded gratefully and regarded her for a long moment before turning back to William, " They don't have much time, do they?"

He shook his head, " I need to get ahold of the other artifact pieces, and fast"

Regina fought to get her fear under control as she glanced at him and swallowed, " What for?"

"The more pieces I have, the stronger the combined energy is. I need enough to completely heal their cancer"

Emma nodded and Regina again marveled at Emma Swan's ability to comprehend everything going on and react accordingly. She had significantly underestimated Emma's intelligence and capacity for grasping new and foreign concepts. She had underestimated Emma in many ways she realized. The blonde was stronger than Regina had ever given her credit for. She had underestimated her determination, her willingness to fight, her capacity for compassion and love. She had underestimated her ability to focus on the task at hand while comforting those around her. And Regina certainly needed the comfort. Regina herself was completely overwhelmed and felt like she was in a raging ocean with waves constantly crashing over her head, leaving her sputtering. Emma's presence was the only thing helping her keep her head above water so to speak.

Emma seemed to sense how lost she felt because the blonde squeezed her hand gently, sending a calming wave of magic through her system and smiled before returning her attention to William, “ Any ideas on where to start?”

William nodded, “ The New Syndicate will have them”

Dana shook her head, “ How can you be sure? The artifacts we came across were taken by supersoldiers”

“ Yes, but what you don’t know Mom is that the new syndicate is entirely comprised of either super soldiers or Dark Ones and their primary interest is consolidating power, specifically the artifacts of that ancient wall. They are trying to collect enough to allow the darkness to have it’s own form.”

“ That’s what A.L.I.E was after” Regina pointed out, “She needed my daughter's heart and the flame.”

William nodded, “ Yes. She and Beca as you know, were dark ones. A.L.I.E was unusual for a dark one because she could project a physical form, but did not have a physical form. She wanted to use your daughters heart to cast the spell necessary to take on a physical form”

“ Why didn’t she just use my daughter's form?” Emma asked.

William arched a brow at her,as if she should know this “ because a Dark One cannot use a Savior as a host. You are living proof of that Emma. You were never possessed by the darkness, remember? Your magic as savior is your greatest strength, and a Savior’s heart is coveted by the darkness, it’s the tool needed to give them the one thing it can’t have otherwise”

The prophecy once again taunted Regina, “ So a savior’s heart...”

“ Is the primary source of their power. All their magic flows directly from a heart created by true love. Anyone who has a heart of true love, whether they are born into it, or their heart becomes a true love heart as a result of their choices, is a savior. And the prophecy regarding a savior’s heart refers to the fact that until you two, every

savior has inevitably fallen to a villain after their heart”

Regina recalled Cora attempting to steal Emma’s heart, Pan stealing Henry’s before Regina protected it, Raven’s heart being stolen. It suddenly sank in that not only was she now a savior, but *all* of her children were. Henry too was a savior if she was following William correctly.

Something else occurred to her in that moment regarding Henry and his true believer’s heart and Regina frowned, “ Rumpel spent time in New York, that’s where he ran back to with Hades’ crystal as well”

It was Emma who voiced what she really wanted to know and she was once again amazed at how quickly Emma seemed to catch on to thoughts and questions she struggled to voice, “ Does that mean there’s a chance that Rumpel is involved with this syndicate?”

Regina sensed that she already knew the answer when she seemed completely unsurprised when William nodded, “ I would be surprised if he wasn’t. He’s spent a great deal of time in New York, especially when he was forced from the town by his true love and developed a number of shady connections while there”

Regina’s frown deepened, “ The syndicate is in New York?”

He nodded, “ They’ve been there since the 1960’s at least.”

“ So we need to go to New York, and take these Artifacts back. How in the world are we going to manage that in time to save everyone?” Regina asked, fear once more lacing her voice. Emma was watching her again with a frown. Emma seemed to sense Regina’s fear, and the depth of it seemed to surprise the blonde.

Regina saw movement from the corner of her eye and turned to see Lena standing wearily in the doorway, having returned from following her mother to the medical wing. The younger Reyes asked “ What about the chips? If we can find a way to reactivate those...”

William nodded, “ It’s a temporary solution at best, it will halt their progression and buy us valuable time, but if it fails, they will be right back where they are now, where you are now”

Lena sighed, “ But it could buy you time to find the artifacts you need, correct? And minimize our symptoms in the meantime?”

Regina knew Lena was desperate for a glimmer of hope to latch onto, frankly she felt much the same. She suddenly found herself wishing she could trade in a few quarters for a patented Snow White hope speech right now.

William seemed to sense the same, “ Yes Lena, it can buy us time, and stop the symptoms”

She nodded firmly, accepting the glimmer of hope eagerly, “ So how do we reactivate them?”

He glanced at Emma, “ How are Raven’s hacking and coding skills?”

Regina nearly chuckled at Emma’s arched eyebrow, “ Don’t you already know the answer to that?”

A light smirk tugged at the corners of William's mouth, amusement dancing in his blue eyes, “ I don’t enjoy coming across as an insufferable know it all”

Lena snorted, “ Could have fooled me”

He frowned and she waved him off, “ Sorry, my humor is shit right now”

William said nothing, just nodded. He glanced at Emma and then Regina, “ Why don’t you two go rest. You both look...”

Regina glanced at the woman beside her as Emma simply nodded, “ Some rest would be great, I’m running on empty and it’s going to take a few hours to get everything together for New York anyway”

Regina’s grip on the blonde’s hand loosened slightly as the ache in her chest eased. The blonde’s words had reassured her that Emma was not leaving this boy to do this alone. Emma caught her relief and smiled warmly at her, indicating that reassurance had certainly been Emma’s intent.

Lena frowned, “ Emma, a word please?”

Emma gave her a barely perceptible nod before brushing a kiss to Regina's temple, " Be right back"

Regina watched them leave the room before glancing back at the fifteen year old boy who seemed so much older than he appeared. She had to remind herself that this boy was not a child, nor was he hers. Her instinct was to wrap him in her arms and shield him from anything that could harm him. The irony was that she could not shield him from his own fate anymore than she had succeeded in shielding herself or her family from theirs. Knowing that though did nothing to lessen the intensity of her desire to protect him.

Her eyes met his and she was startled to see a level of intelligent curiosity. He was studying her with the same scrutiny she hadn't even realized she was directing at him. She shook her head and apologized, " I don't mean to stare, I just"

He waved off her concern, " You are immensely curious about me. It's alright Regina"

Emma came back into the room and Regina noted with fear that Emma's expression was notably more grim.

William was already ahead of her, nodding, " My sister is pretty perceptive. Very well, we will talk to her, tomorrow. But for now, I meant what I said. You both need your rest before we continue this plan. I promise to wait until everyone has had rest. We can continue this tomorrow"

Regina glanced at Emma for clarification but the blonde shook her head, her expression begging Regina to wait. Emma looked completely exhausted and overwhelmed, " He's right. We need a break Regina. It's late, we are all exhausted and I would like to spend a little time with my family before we head for New York"

Regina nodded and let the blonde wrap an arm around her waist and lead her back towards their room as Lena stayed behind to speak with William privately. Their kids were crowding the hall outside their rooms but Emma raised a hand, " You guys may come sit with us if you wish, but there will be no discussing anything until tomorrow. We all need our rest. No bugging Monica, Dana or Lena

about it either.”

Kara pushed her way through gently, a tall dark haired man with glasses identical to Kara’s right beside her, “ How is Lena? How’s Monica?”

“ They are okay for now. We have a very busy couple of days ahead of us, and Raven?”

Raven stepped in front of Emma, “ Yes Ma?”

“ Get some sleep. You have a long day of coding and hacking ahead of you tomorrow, you too Winn” Raven looked immensely curious but Lexa cleared her throat gently, drawing everyone’s attention to her, “ Nomon, Henry called. Rumplestiltskin has apparently left Storybrooke. He was spotted crossing the town line with Excalibur”

Emma nodded, and while Regina was reeling from this latest development, Emma took it in stride, “ Okay, we will deal with that tomorrow. For now though, is everyone safe?”

Lexa nodded, “ Yes, everyone seems to be settling in okay, in spite of everything going on. Henry has managed to get everyone fairly organized with Mal’s help. She and Lily are patrolling the skies while the Charmings are assisting the new deputies patrol the borders of Storybrooke, and several of my guards have volunteered to safeguard the portals. He has everything well in hand.”

Lexa seemed to sense Regina’s fears and took her mother’s free hand in her own, “ nomon, sen ai op. *Mother, listen to me* . He’s been training with my best warriors and strategists. He is the author and fleimkepa, as well as a recognized Prince and Savior. His authority is both acknowledged and respected by my people and yours. He has Ontari and Aiden by his side at all times, Azgeda’s troops and mine at his command, as well as the shapeshifters. He’s doing just fine nomon. I know it is hard, seeing him step into this role so young, but you know as well as I do that he is the one best suited for such a daunting task. He has demonstrated that he is more than capable, more than ready for the responsibility of leading. I would not have made him fleimkepa if he was not. More than that, he isn’t doing this alone.”

Regina nodded, knowing her daughter was right. While Henry would always be her child in her eyes, her little prince had grown and matured into an intelligent young man with strong leadership skills. He, like all her children was born for leadership. It comforted her to know that he was handling his responsibilities well, and that he had a large support network to fall back on should he need it. He was safe, and arguably safer than they were.

Regina nodded her thanks, squeezing her daughter's hand, fighting back the tears in her eyes. She wasn't sure if it was sheer exhaustion making her so emotional, or if it was the completely overwhelming task they had ahead of them or both. But knowing her son was safe made things a little easier.

Emma glanced at her and took charge, ordering everyone to bed, "Breakfast as a family at seven." She glanced at Kara and Clark Kent, "That means you two and the rest of your family as well."

Kara's eyes lit up at being included as family and she nodded eagerly, "You got it Auntie Em"

Emma chuckled, "See you in the morning. Please make sure Lena gets some sleep, she's been running on empty all day today".

Kara nodded solemnly, "I'm on it. Want me to send Abby and Z to bed as well?"

Emma laughed, "Good luck getting them to listen to you, but yeah, tell them tomorrow's gonna be longer than today and we need them at their best. I have a feeling we are in for a rough fight in the next few days."

Kara swallowed, "You will tell us what's going on right?"

Emma glanced at Regina, holding her closer as she noticed that Regina was now swaying on her feet, staying awake and alert by sheer will, "Yes, I will. I promise. But everyone needs rest more right now. I need to get Regina in bed before she passes out right here" Regina wanted to retort that she was standing right there, but it felt like someone had shoved cotton in her mouth, and dropped lead on her tongue. Even her attempt to arch her eyebrows was failing.

Clark Kent glanced at Regina and placed a hand on Kara's back, "Come on cousin, let's go round up the others and let these two get some rest" everyone else seemed to agree with his assessment and headed for their rooms as well.

Emma flashed him a grateful smile before gently leading Regina into their room, only releasing her when the back of Regina's knees hit the bed.

Regina was numb with exhaustion. She was still recovering from the magic she had expended several days earlier, and now, they were likely heading into another fight, and her magic still hadn't returned. Emma's had, and the blonde expended it generously, constantly giving Regina a boost throughout the day to get her through, but now the blonde appeared to be as unsteady on her feet as she was. She sat there like stone, unable to move as Emma kicked off her shoes and padded softly about the room, gathering Regina's pajamas. She knelt in front of the brunette and gently removed her shoes.

Regina tried to assist as much as possible but her limbs stubbornly refused to cooperate with her, leaving Emma to gently undress and dress her. Emma slipped the soft nightshirt over her head and gently tugged it into place while brushing a kiss to Regina's forehead, "Okay, think you can lie back?"

Regina swallowed and tried to move her tired legs. Emma gave her a small smile as she gently lifted Regina's legs and helped her lie down. Regina sighed when her head hit the pillow, drowsiness immediately taking hold. Emma murmured, "Be right back" and headed for her suitcase to change clothes. Regina closed her eyes and the urge to sleep won out over waiting for Emma to join her.

Several hours later Regina's eyes opened in the dark room. She had slept deeply, and surprisingly, she hadn't dreamt anything either. She was still fatigued but her bladder was protesting loudly, dragging her from her slumber. She felt Emma shift behind her, the blonde's arm flung over Regina's waist, her legs entangled with her own. Regina sighed and relaxed into the blonde's embrace as Emma shifted closer in her sleep, her nose pressed into Regina's neck. Somehow, even in

sleep, Emma exuded a calm that was contagious. Regina was grateful for that. She didn't want to move from the comfort and safety of her arms, but her bladder demanded it. Regina sighed as she carefully disentangled herself from Emma and slid from beneath the covers and headed for the restroom.

Upon her return a few moments later she noticed Emma sitting up, her hair sticking out everywhere, as the blonde rubbed her eyes blearily, "Gina? You okay?"

She sat back on the bed and nodded, " I'm fine dear, needed a bathroom break is all. I didn't mean to wake you"

Emma shook her head as she tugged the brunette back down into her arms, kissing her shoulder as Regina shifted back onto her side and Emma once again wrapped herself around her, " You didn't, just missed you is all"

Regina threaded her fingers with Emma's, tugging the blonde more firmly against her back and sighed, " Missed you too. I didn't want to get up, but my bladder wasn't leaving me much choice"

Emma nodded, her nose tickling Regina's neck. " Go back to sleep, it's too early to be up yet, and you are still unsteady on your feet"

Regina turned over and Emma willingly tugged her into her arms, shifting so that Regina's head rested on her chest, " Thank you, for taking care of me earlier"

Emma kissed her hair, "Pro" *you're welcome*

Regina managed a small smile at the switch to trigesasleng, " I'm beginning to think you prefer the grounder's language to our own"

" Sha, ai Haiplana. Hosh daun ai snogon" *yes my queen. Sleep my love.* Emma whispered, already giving in to her own exhaustion.

Regina kissed Emma's knuckles with a smile, "Hofli yu na rid yu op os snogon" *I hope you sleep well love.* She settled herself into Emma's arms and let herself relax, listening to the steady rhythm of Emma's heart beneath her head. It only took a moment more before she too was sound asleep once more.

The next time she awoke, she found herself acutely missing Emma's warmth. Her hand snaked across the bed, trying to locate Emma, but she wasn't in the bed. Glancing around the dark room groggily, she noticed the bathroom light on and relaxed. The place where Emma had been was still warm and Regina found herself sliding into Emma's side of the bed, taking the pillow that had been beneath Emma's head and tucking it to her chest as she waited for Emma to return. Emma left the restroom a moment later and smirked, "Missing your cuddle buddy already?" she teased. Regina huffed in false irritation and flung said pillow at the blonde who dodged it easily with a chuckle. Regina frowned as she sat up, "You're dressed already?"

Emma nodded, "It's almost seven. Figured I'd let you sleep as long as possible, you clearly needed it"

Regina nodded her agreement, "I haven't been this exhausted since I absorbed the death curse."

Emma frowned as she sat beside the brunette and tangled their fingers together. It seemed to Regina that they both craved that touch, the reassurance that the other was close enough to touch. Emma met Regina's gaze as Regina puzzled over the sudden mood shift, "Emma' what's wrong?"

"Nothing... It's just.. I never thanked you for that."

It took her a moment to catch up with what the blonde was thinking, "Emma, you did. Right after it happened"

"Yeah, but I mean I never *really* thanked you for that, and I let you deal with the consequences of that curse alone. And knowing what I know now, it's remarkable you even survived that."

Regina sighed, "Emma. stop. I knew you were grateful. And at that point, even if you had offered to help me, I wouldn't have let you, and as you said, I'm fine. Stop beating yourself up for things that happened decades ago. Those early years between us were rough, yes, and we weren't always there for each other the way we should

have been, but we were barely on speaking terms, let alone friends. I wouldn't change any of it if I could anyway. If we changed it, would there be any guarantee that we would still have ended up here, together, with our beautiful family"

Emma nodded, accepting her words, " Well, Thank you, for saving my mother and me. It... meant a lot to us."

Regina couldn't help herself, "Mother and I, dear"

Emma's brow furrowed in confusion, " What?"

Regina smirked, " You said *mother and me* , it's actually supposed to be *mother and I* "

Emma stared at her like she'd grown another head, " I give you a heartfelt thank you and your response is to pick apart my grammar?"

Regina chuckled and patted Emma's knee, "Did you really expect any different dear?"

Emma shook her head, fighting the smirk that tugged at her lips, " You'd think I'd be used to it by now."

Regina laughed and stood to her feet, immediately swaying. Emma caught her easily and sat her back on the bed, "Easy killer. I told you that you weren't quite back to normal yet"

Regina growled, " My body's never taken this long to recover before"

Emma was digging through her suitcase again, finding a suitable outfit for Regina to wear as she watched, irritated with her body's refusal to cooperate with her commands. " You've never completely expended your magic before either Regina. I told you, it takes time. You are actually recovering a lot faster than I did my first time."

Regina frowned and waited for Emma to explain that comment but Emma returned to her side, holding up an outfit, " This suitable enough, your Majesty?"

Regina nodded, suddenly feeling less playful. Emma caught on and gently helped her dress once more as Regina worked up the courage

to ask, “ What happened? That first time you completely spent your magic?”

The dark expression on Emma’s face nearly made her take the question back, but Emma glanced up from sliding heels on her feet grinning, “ How you manage to wear these things all day I’ll never understand. Are you sure you are up for walking around in heels today?”

Regina nodded, allowing Emma to change the subject, “ It’s all I’ve brought, so I suppose I don’t have much choice do I?”

Emma sighed, and Regina saw her expression morph once more, “ I was in the realm of the four lands tracking Killian. I mentioned before that he was targeting our descendents?”

Regina nodded her agreement, “ Yes.”

“ Well, in the four lands, there’s this line of elves, the Elesedil line. I have no idea how they are related to us. I haven’t been able to figure out how Killian knew who was a descendent of ours and who wasn’t, but apparently this family of elves are”

“ So he didn’t jump into each realm and find the nearest savior?”

Emma actually chuckled, “ No, he didn’t. That would have seemed more his style, and definitely what I expected of him given his impulsive nature, but Killian as a dark one was far more calculated than I anticipated. The longer I chased him, the more apparent it became that there’s several bloodlines of saviors and somehow he could tell which belonged to us. So clearly, he was researching and specifically targeting them.”

Regina accepted her words with a frown. It made sense, the dark one changed the host to reflect itself, Emma and Lexa being the only known exceptions to the rule. “ Have you asked him about it?”

Emma’s expression darkened, “ He has no memory of it. He only remembers his brief stint as dark one in Storybrooke”

She raised her hand, silencing Regina’s protest, “ I know, it seems convenient, but he truly doesn’t remember Regina. I checked. His

memories of his time as the dark one were extracted along with the darkness. Only those that were stored in the memory catchers and his time in storybrooke remain. The rest... I believe Rumpel has”

“ Of course that little imp took them. What does he want with our descendents?”

“ To manipulate them, twist them to his will. Use them to help him find other pieces of this mystery metal compound no doubt. Killian was after both the chosen, and the seed”

Regina shook her head, “ I’m lost. What?”

Emma rose off the ground and sat beside Regina, taking a deep breath and Regina’s hand, she continued with the story she had begun before they had gotten off track, “ I had chased Killian to the four lands. He infiltrated Arborlon, the elvish capital. He poisoned the Ellcrys, causing her to start dying well before her time. Each Ellcrys is actually an elven girl who gave herself for the four lands, and apparently, they are all our descendents. Killian poisoned the tree to flush out the savior from our bloodline, and to try and get his hands on the seed. I followed him, tried to stop him, and ended up trying to save an entire realm from a demon horde. That’s how I expended my magic the first time, trying to save the villages on the far side of the kingdom from the demons. I nearly died. While most of the elven army was trying to hold the demon army back long enough for the young girl from our bloodline to save everyone, I was a kingdom away, trying to defend the human settlements from another army. All of Hell was unleashed on the four lands, and let me tell you, what we experienced in the underworld is absolutely nothing compared to what lives in actual Hell.”

Regina shuddered, “ Am I to assume that the seed...?”

Emma chuckled darkly, “That the seed is forged from the same material as the artifacts? Yes. and the Ellcrys, or rather, the girl who became the ellcrys was one of the prophesied saviors from our line. She actually saved my life. I was losing, badly to the demon hordes when Amberle became the tree and forced the demon hordes back to hell. By then, I was completely spent, fighting hand to hand, rather than with my magic. Looking back, it’s a miracle I survived, dark one

or not. I spent three weeks recovering in the human settlement before heading on to chase Killian through Narnia”

Regina laughed until she realized Emma was dead serious, “Narnia, really?”

Emma sighed heavily, “ You sound like me when I first realized magic was real. Look. You already know that our realms stories are reality in another realm. Assume that’s the case with virtually every story ever told. Name a story, and there’s a realm that story derives from. Its part of this theory of the multiverse, and the fact that one universe or realm bleeds over into another, usually in the form of the stories we tell. I’ve been to hundreds of realms, met millions of creatures and people. After a while, I stopped questioning whether or not a story I’ve heard could have originated from real people’s lives. I assume now that every story I hear, see or read exists somewhere, in this universe or another”

“ So you think no story is truly original? It has a source somewhere. If that’s true...”

“ That means that people are crossing from one universe or realm to another all the time, and bringing their stories with them, yes. It really shouldn’t surprise you. You realm jumped quite a bit with Jefferson. Just since I came to storybrooke, we’ve encountered various realms. It’s difficult to do, but with the right tools, either magic or technology, it’s remarkably simple.”

Regina processed this information, a smile tugging at her lips. Emma noticed, “ What?”

“ Nothing dear. I just... It’s an adjustment, realizing that you know a great deal more than I ever gave you credit for. I knew you were more intelligent than you let on, but... in the last few weeks, I am discovering I know so very little about you”

Emma shook her head, “ Not true, you know more about me than anyone else Regina. You just don’t know everything about who I am now. I’ve changed a great deal. It takes time, relearning someone after you’ve been apart. People change. That’s life”

Someone pounded on the door, “ Breakfast is ready! Get your...” Emma flicked the door open with her magic and promptly launched a fireball at a surprised Zelena who barely dodged it in time. She threw an indignant glare at the blonde, “ Hey, what was that for?”

Regina glanced at Emma and noted the cheeky grin on the blonde’s face before turning to her sister, “ Must you always be so obnoxious so early in the morning?”

Zelena straightened and nodded, “ It’s my job to irritate you, dear sister of mine.”

Regina rolled her eyes, “ and it’s one you take entirely too seriously. If you had any common sense, you would at least wait until we’ve had my morning coffee.”

“ Or at the very least refrain from harassing us this early out of a sense of self preservation” Emma added helpfully.

Zelena nodded, “ Duly noted. Coffee is in the cafeteria, with the rest of our family.”

Maybe it was a little ridiculous at this point for sentences like that to make Regina intensely emotional, but it still caught her off guard, knocking the breath from her lungs and fighting the shit eating grin that inevitably came with the realization that they were indeed one big messy, beautiful family. Emma glanced at her and smiled.

She leaned in and whispered, “ I know. I still get knocked off my feet sometimes when I realize what an amazing life we get to lead”

Regina swallowed, and brushed a few tears from her eyes, and Zelena frowned, clearly debating a snarky answer, but settling with, “ I think we all do” her blue eyes were watching Regina with a wry smile. Regina nodded, acknowledging the emotion in her sister’s gaze. Being warm and affectionate didn’t come easy to either of the Mills sisters, but this family was slowly but surely softening them, teaching them that vulnerability didn’t have to always hurt. They still weren’t at a place where they were comfortable with prolonged heartfelt conversations or physical affection, so they glanced furtively at each other instead and gave each other brief nods before straightening.

Still, neither slipped behind the mask of their snarky humor as they walked together to the cafeteria. Zelena actually seemed rather eager to be involved, helpful even, as she headed in ahead of them and fetched coffees for both Emma and Regina. Emma stared at the redhead in surprise as Regina murmured a quiet thank you to her sister. Zelena actually flushed before turning and seating herself by Abby, trying to hide the fact that she was happy to have had a pleasant interaction with the Swan Mills without too much verbal sparring.

Regina felt Emma's hand at her back as the blonde led her to the empty chair beside Lexa. Emma gave her a look when Regina tried to argue that she didn't need Emma to serve her and she sighed.

She understood Emma's protectiveness of her. She understood that Emma was stronger and had more experience with the loss of her magic. She also knew that Emma was acutely aware of how vulnerable and off balance being magicless left her feeling. And she knew Emma Swan needed to be able to help in whatever small ways she could. So she allowed Emma this. Emma placed a steaming plate of food before her. Emma sat beside her a moment later, digging into her own plate.

Glancing around the room, she noticed three empty chairs in the center of the large table. Clark Kent and Kara sat up by one end of the table, with Cat Grant at the head. Clarke and Lexa sat opposite the Supers, then herself and Emma. Raven and Winn sat opposite them. Across from the empty seats sat Zelena, Abby and William and at the far end were Alex and Maggie.

No one seemed to be in the mood to discuss much of anything. Everyone was acutely aware that the table was missing three very sick women and it was clearly affecting everyone's morale. William looked the most removed from what everyone else was feeling, lost in a world of his own from the faraway look in his eyes. That was hardly surprising given what Regina had learned about him last night.

Kara on the other hand looked distracted for another reason entirely. Her apparent lack of appetite reflected her concern for Lena. Regina glanced at the Kryptonian frequently and noticed that each time, the

same amount of food was on her plate, it was just more and more mangled as she played with her fork. She debated whether or not to say anything for several moments.

Glancing at Lexa, she noticed her daughter watching Kara with a frown before suddenly pushing her chair back and crossing the room, murmuring something softly to the Kryptonian and leading her from the room. Clarke simply shrugged when Regina arched an eyebrow, “She’s good at this sort of thing.”

Cat Grant sighed from her chair next to Kara’s now empty one and reached for Kara’s plate, dumping it in the trash. Glancing around the room the older blonde shook her head in frustration, “I’ve never seen such a depressing assembly of heroes.”

Regina shot her a glare and started to protest but Abby beat her to it, “We aren’t depressed. We are exhausted. You see a bunch of heroes who appear depressed after winning a large battle and facing another one. What you don’t seem to grasp, is that this has been our lives for years. One disaster after another. A new day means a new battle to fight, a new enemy to face down. And with each passing day, the obstacles grow, the enemies are stronger, more powerful.”

Cat arched a blonde eyebrow, “You think it isn’t like that here? You think we don’t deal with the exact same thing on a daily basis? You all discuss the monster of the week, we have the alien invasion of the week.”

Regina sighed, “It’s not a competition...”

“No, it’s not. And had you let me finish, you would realize I wasn’t passing judgement, I was trying to point out that the moment you start seeing challenges as obstacles, you’ve already lost the battle”

Raven glanced at her mother before turning to Cat, “Okay... So how would you call what we are facing. How is a new mysterious form of cancer not an obstacle? How is facing an entire army of dark ones and so called super soldiers not an obstacle? How is dealing with Cadmus and the threat they pose to us not an obstacle?”

Emma spoke softly, “She’s referring to our perspective Raven. When

we think of the challenges we see in our lives as obstacles, we tend to allow them to box us in. Seeing them as obstacles prevents us from finding solutions. It creates a self defeating cycle” Emma’s tone was soft, gentle even. She wasn’t chastising her daughter, she was sharing something she had clearly learned over the years.

Cat nodded satisfied, “ I agree that the challenges we face are indeed difficult, but to imply that they are obstacles gives them the power, and robs you of yours. It makes it more difficult to see how to overcome them. It traps you in a mindset where you see them as something you must overcome, but feel you cannot. Feelings take over, rather than reason. That is what makes obstacles insurmountable, our perspectives.”

Regina processed her words with a hint of a smile.

Cat looked annoyed, “ What do you find so amusing Queenie?”

Regina rolled her eyes at the rather obnoxious nickname Cat had coined for her and asked, “ Do you work for the hope commission as well Ms Grant?”

Cat looked torn between confusion and being highly offended while Zelena barked out a laugh, “ you get a quarter every time you use the word hope, right?”

Emma’s smirk appeared, “ The hope commission, Snow told me about that”

“ What on earth are you all talking about?” Cat asked, thoroughly confused as to how her hope speech had been so quickly derailed. Although, from the look on her face, she was realizing it still had it’s intended effect. The mood in the room had lightened considerably.

Emma chuckled as she explained, “ Regina is convinced that my mother secretly works for what she calls the Hope commission, that her job is to give endless hope speeches on the fly”

Cat actually laughed and Regina relaxed. She hadn’t wanted to offend Cat. The woman reminded her a great deal of Snow, and as loathe as she was to admit it, having Cat Grant around to keep them grounded

had actually helped a great deal. She could see why Kara was so drawn to the woman. She was clearly a solid influence on the Kryptonian.

Regina waved her hand to Cat, “ I apologize for interrupting your lovely Hope speech, please continue.”

Cat smirked, “ I was simply pointing out that given the challenges you’ve overcome in the past, and the rather creative ways you’ve accomplished it each time, I fail to see how this particular set of challenges is any different.”

She raised her hand to Abby before she could fire off a retort, “ Yes, I am aware that we are dealing with the big C. I have not forgotten the seriousness of the battle your friends are fighting. I am not in any way trying to negate their suffering or your own. I am simply pointing out that I am sitting in a room full of very capable individuals who have already demonstrated that they have the intelligence, technical capabilities and determination to overcome literally everything that has come at them. The details of this particular set of circumstances is different, I would be a fool trying to argue otherwise. My point is that if it were anyone else sitting in this room trying to tackle this set of circumstances, I have no doubt that they would try, only to fail. But having seen what this group can do firsthand, I have no doubt that not only are you the only ones who stand a chance of beating the current challenges, but you are the only group who actually will.”

Regina nodded, Cat wasn’t wrong. Their unique talents did make them uniquely suited to the tasks at hand. But only if you stop wallowing in self pity, get off your rear ends and use the talents you have. You have no less than four geniuses in this group, and having met all of you, I would argue that there is not a single person here who is not highly intelligent. Everyone here is highly skilled. Each member of this group brings a unique set of gifts and talents to the equation as well as their own unique perspectives. I have the utmost faith that if anyone can find a cure to a new form of cancer and defeat an army of the most evil beings in the entirety of this universe and any other, it is this group.”

Regina couldn’t deny that Cat Grant’s hope speeches were incredible.

Nor could she deny that it actually helped. A quick glance around the room confirmed this. She grinned, “ Next time I see the Hope commission, I’ll let them know they owe you a quarter”

Cat laughed as Lexa led a considerably calmer Kara back into the room. She sat in her chair and Cat patted her on the shoulder as Lexa fixed her a new plate. Lexa placed the plate in front of the Kryptonian and gave her a sharp look, “ Choj op” *eat*.

Kara nodded, apparently understanding the order and dug in without argument. Lexa watched her a moment longer before returning to her own meal. Regina watched Lexa wave a hand over her plate and her plate was steaming once more. Regina frowned, “ You have your magic back already? How?”

Lexa shrugged, “ Side effect of being a former Dark One I suppose. Ma says that it expands your magic reserves considerably, allows us to pull from the earth as well when our own is depleted. Mine is clearly still recovering, but I can do the little things at least.”

Regina huffed, “ I can’t even light a damned candle”

Zelena chuckled, “ You never were a patient one Regina.”

Raven was watching Emma quietly. “ Ma, you had something to tell us this morning, I’m hacking and coding... and... there was something else too, something that disturbed you?”

Regina glanced at Raven and noted that Raven was watching them both.

Emma nodded, “ I did but let’s finish breakfast, then head for the debriefing room. The DEO needs to hear this as well”

That caught Alex’s attention. She and Maggie hadn’t spoken at all through breakfast, content to watch and observe rather than engage with the large family they found themselves eating with. While Maggie chuckled along with the bits of humor throughout the conversations, Alex seemed to feel like an outsider in this room. Regina could sense her insecurity as well as her fear that she was losing her sister to a family far larger and that shared more in

common with her than Alex did. Alex clearly felt inadequate and ill equipped in a room full of magic users and superheroes. Alex seemed to have missed the fact that an invite to join them for breakfast with this group was a clear sign that she had been readily adopted into the ever growing family from the start. Maggie seemed to grasp this and was clearly more comfortable in her own skin around complete strangers, but was determined to support her girlfriend. Aside from Winn and Cat, they were the only “normal” humans in the room, and Regina was mildly surprised that they didn’t seem to want to sit next to at least one of them. Lena was in the medical suite with her mother and Dana. They were too sick to join them for breakfast, or any meal at this point, and Mulder was still being detained.

The meal was finished in silence and everyone pitched in to help clean up before heading for the briefing. Regina hesitated and Emma glanced at her. She waved her ahead and waited for Alex and Maggie.

She wasn’t sure why, but she felt the need to make sure Alex knew she was a welcome addition to this strange family.

Emma caught on and grinned, flashing Regina a thumbs up before turning away.

Alex and Maggie emerged and Alex startled slightly when she realized Regina was waiting for them just outside the door, “ Ms. Mills. Everything alright?”

“ I’m fine dear, I was going to ask you the same.”

Alex’s eyes narrowed, but Maggie relaxed, shifting so that her hands slid into her pockets as she watched the interaction with amused interest.

“ What do you mean?” Alex asked.

“ You are worried about losing Kara” Alex seemed startled by Regina’s insight, “ I wanted to clear the air”

“ Clear the air” Alex repeated, her brow furrowing in confusion, “About what?”

Maggie was smirking and Regina gave her a pointed look before returning her attention to the older Danvers, “ Alex, you don’t need to separate yourself, and hide at the end of the table. You were invited to have breakfast with us for a reason.”

Regina waited for it to sink in but Alex was still shaking her head, “ Sorry, I’m confused. Why were we invited to breakfast, everyone barely spoke this morning. Was there some purpose to it that I am unaware of?”

Maggie chortled, “ Damn Danvers, you can be so dense at times”

Regina nodded at Alex, “ We were quiet this morning, yes, but conversing wasn’t the point. It was being together, as a family.”

Alex swallowed as she processed Regina’s words, “ As a family... and you invited me and Maggie because...”

Maggie smacked Alex’s arm, “ Because we are family, moron”

Alex’s eyes widened comically, and if Regina hadn’t been so worried about Alex feeling threatened, she would have laughed. Instead she nodded, “ That was a family breakfast Alex. you’ve been eating with us since we got here. Most everyone else seemed to grasp what was going on, but with your concern over losing Kara, I think the message got lost in translation. So let me clear the air”

Alex nodded, “ Okay, clear it, because I’m still confused. I know I’m Kara’s sister...”

Regina huffed, “ You were invited to a family breakfast. Who are the first people you invite to a family gathering Alex?”

“Family” it took a moment for the word to sink in before understanding dawned on Alex’s face. “ Oh. So you are saying you consider us family as well!” She seemed equally excited and puzzled by the revelation.

Regina chuckled with Maggie, “ Precisely. You are one of us. We invited you because we want you there. We want you to feel free to interact with us. We are not replacing you in Kara’s life. Quite the opposite in fact.”

Alex grinned, “ I’ve never been adopted before. This is cool!”

Maggie rolled her eyes, “ Sorry Ms. Mills, for someone so smart, she can be really dense sometimes”

Regina nodded, “ Please, call me Regina. We are family after all. It’s a bit odd to hear family to use such formalities. Now, shall we join the others?”

Alex nodded, her expression notably lighter, a slight spring in her step, “ We’ve got a big crazy loud family” She stage whispered to Maggie who laughed, “ We had a big noisy family before Danvers, now it’s just a whole lot bigger”

Regina smirked as she led them into the conference room. Inside, everyone was waiting rather solemnly and Regina steeled herself. Whatever Emma had to share was big, and she suspected it wasn’t going to make their lives any easier.

Emma nodded, “ Waiting for one more”

They waited another moment before an exhausted Lena entered the room. The young woman looked terrible. There were gaunt circles under her eyes, her limbs trembled from exhaustion. Emma nodded and pointed to a chair at the head of the room beside her. Lena made her way gingerly through the crowd as Kara fought the urge to hover over her and fuss. A sharp look from Lexa kept her in her place though and Kara relaxed at the silent reminder of whatever they had discussed.

Lena nodded once she was seated, “ Ready when you are”

Emma sighed, “ Lena brought something to my attention yesterday, and we thought it would be best to wait to inform everyone until we had all had some much needed rest. What Lena is about to tell you can either work against us, or for us. We aren’t sure yet. That rather depends on Lillian Luthor and her willingness to be forthcoming and cooperative”

“ Forthcoming about what?” Kara asked, tensing visibly at the mention of Lillian Luthor.

Lena sighed heavily before clearing her throat awkwardly, “ I suspect Lillian has somehow learned about the threat CSM poses. I think much of her propaganda war against aliens, and her efforts to create weapons to combat them derives from her knowledge of CSM’s plot”

“ What makes you say that?” Lexa asked. Her brow was furrowed in concentration.

Lena swallowed, “ Because over the last few years, she’s created several genetically altered humans designed specifically to combat aliens, some of them seem to be targeted at specific races of aliens. I... suspect... that she is aware of the threat that Super soldiers pose to the planet, and may have worked out how they are made. And Anyone who is familiar with my mother knows she prefers to fight fire with fire...”

Regina’s chin lifted in mild surprise and she glanced at Emma for confirmation. Emma gave her a barely perceptible nod, and Regina stated quietly, “ So there’s a good chance she thought the best way to fight super soldiers was to create supersoldiers of her own”

Lena nodded, “ I’m not sure, but I think the real Hank Henshaw was Cadmus’ first”

“ First what?” Maggie asked. From her expression, she knew the answer, but she needed it stated clearly.

William answered, “ Cadmus has their own army of super soldiers”

Notes for the Chapter:

the next chapter will focus on Lena and Kara. and yes the brief Supercorp moments throughout this story (yes I know you've had to squint to catch some of em) are building up to something. same with Winn and Raven, Monica and Dana, and Abby and Zelena. We will get there eventually. All of those relationships involve extremely stubborn individuals and it makes no sense to rush the characters into it before they are ready, so bear with me.

oh, and dont forget about the prompts folks.

whenever I get stuck on this, I need prompts to fall back on to keep the story moving and give the brain time to figure out where it's going with this beast of a story. as it is, it may surpass brave enough in length to do everything I want to. lol. so when you see something in the story you would like to see expanded, drop me a line under the prompts. I will either make it a prompt, or include it in the story itself

19. The war is over

Notes for the Chapter:

WARNING: emotional drama between a controlling mom and her kid. will likely hit you in the feels. for those that dynamic might be a trigger for, proceed with caution, but hopefully this will help heal wounds, not cause more.

also, supercorp fluff ahead. they wont let me speed up the development of their relationship just yet... but still, cute moments ahead with different elements of the family.

I apologize for the week long delay. I was supposed to move this week but was made to move last week instead. anyway, this chapter is finally done and the next one has started.

there were two songs playing over and over again in my head when I wrote this chapter. the first was Kelly Clarkson's the war is over. the second has been stuck on a loop in my head since the very first time I heard it. It's Keshas new song, Praying. listen to those two while reading if you like.

anyway, new details emerge in the fight against CSM and the strained dynamic between Lena and Lillian reaches a tipping point. let me know what you think.
Comments = love

Now that her piece had been said, Lena was struggling to focus on the conversation around her. Her ears were ringing loudly, her equilibrium was off kilter. Her mouth felt like dry cotton. And her heart pounded in her chest. She ached from head to toe. Her body was suffering from a combination of insomnia and sensory overload. The voices talking over each other was definitely not helping.

J'onn's booming voice cut through the noise as she weakly covered her ears in protest as she tried to glare at him, " Yell a little louder, why don't ya?"

He blanched when he realized he had caused her pain and apologized

profusely. William waved him off as he knelt in front of his sister. Taking her hands into his own, she felt the whole body ache begin to subside. The ringing in her ears dulled and her mind cleared. She nodded her thanks as she pulled back, “ Better?”

She swallowed, forcing her heavy tongue to form words, “ Yes.” Her voice was hoarse, “ Thanks Will”

He gave her a kind smile, “ It’s not much, but... it should help.” He muttered foreign sounded words over an artifact in his hand before passing it to her, “ Place this in your pocket, it should help with the symptoms til we get your chip reactivated.”

She nodded gratefully. Kara watched her closely from across the room, and Lena tried to give her a smile, but the muscles in her face were still stiff, refusing to cooperate with her efforts.

Oddly enough, while Kara studied her, Lexa studied Kara, and Lena caught the exasperation on the young Heda’s face. She glanced at Lena and mouthed, “ Tell her” before turning and mouthing something to Kara as well. Lena noted the blush appearing in the Kryptonians cheeks and wondered what Lexa had just ordered her to do. She had no doubt it was an order, given the rather frustrated look on the blonde's face. Her infamous crinkle was making it’s presence known.

Lena sighed and returned her attention to the conversation at hand.

“- will need to question her.” J’onn was saying.

Regina scoffed, “ Do you really think she would just sit down and tell us her plans?”

“ Give me thirty minutes with her, I’ll make her talk” Alex stated with a confidence that seriously worried Lena.

Lena shook her head, “ I’ll talk to her. She will talk to me. She doesn’t know or trust any of you. But me... she’s still obsessed with gaining my trust for some reason. We can use that to our advantage.”

Kara immediately volunteered to go with her but Lena shook her head, “ She’s manipulative and conniving Kara. She sees you as weak,

someone to toy with. I need someone she's never met, someone she can't immediately read. Someone who intimidates her, but someone closer to my age. I want to throw her off, as much as possible. The only way she reveals anything is if we are unpredictable and keep her on the defensive

Lexa nodded firmly, " I will accompany you." Her tone brokered no arguments from anyone. Clarke nodded, " I will as well. She knows neither of us, and we have quite a bit of experience dealing with manipulative people"

Lena agreed wearily. Knowing she would have backup in the room with her helped. Everyone else frowned but trusted Lena's judgement, she knew Lillian Luthor best out of all of them. Emma's gaze was sharp. "I will be just outside the door, she pulls any funny business, I go in. got it?"

Lena shook her head, " Regina should handle it"

Emma growled but Lena shook her head more firmly, " She knows what buttons to push with you Emma. She does not know Regina, and she was definitely intimidated by her presence the last time they met. Besides, you are needed to work on the chips."

" I don't like it, leaving you to deal with her. Monica won't like it either"

" It's not up to you, or mom. I'm not asking you to like it Auntie Em, I'm asking you to trust me. I know what I am doing. I know how to handle Lillian Luthor"

Regina placed a restraining hand on Emma's arm as she nodded to Lena, " We know you do. We both are just very protective of our family"

There was that word again. Over the last few days, Lena had gone from feeling completely alone in the world to the startling realization that there were people who genuinely cared about her, loved her and wanted to both be there for her and protect her. Regina caught the wistful expression on Lena's face and released Emma gently to wrap the young Luthor in her arms. Lena couldn't help the smile that split

across her features at the show of affection. She allowed the older woman to hold her close for another moment before Lexa cut in gently, “ We have a lot to do today. And we need to get this interview over with so Lena can go rest.”

Lena swallowed as she pulled back, schooling her features into the indifferent mask she wore around her adoptive mother. Lexa’s eyes glinted with amusement as she gently tugged Lena off to the side, “Mema yu in, chil au” Lena furrowed her brow as she worked to recall the meaning of those particular words from their conversation earlier that morning.

Lexa chuckled when she saw Lena struggling, “Remember to stay calm. Don’t let her get in your head Lena. When you start to lose control, recite..”

Lena nodded, “ Noun, fiyanes, en uf. I know.”

Lexa nodded, satisfied. “ Well, we will go change into something a bit more appropriate and meet you outside the interrogation room. Let us enter first.” It took a moment for Lena to understand why Lexa wanted to enter before she did.

Lena nodded, heading to her room to change as well. She had spent the night beside her birth mother's bed rather than in her own room, and she looked horribly dishevelled. Everyone else was headed for the labs. Regina glanced at Lena, “ would you like some assistance?”

Lena swallowed, considering Regina’s offer. The brunette waited patiently, not pushing Lena. eventually, Lena sighed, “ I need... she’s...”

“ You need armor. That happens to be something I excel at”

Regina motioned to the restroom, “ Would you like a shower first?”

Lena nodded gratefully and Regina smiled, “ I’ll wait out here. When you are ready, let me know and I will help you choose an outfit.”

Lena left Regina seated in a chair on the far side of her room as she stepped into the bathroom and closed the door with a soft click. She carefully undressed and stepped into the shower stall and sighed as

hot water cascaded down her sore body. She washed quickly and stepped out, throwing the robe hanging on the door around her shoulders and tightening the sash before padding into her room.

She found Clarke and Lexa sitting beside Regina on the bed. She stared at them all in surprise before Regina chuckled, “ Your armor is here”

She pointed to a familiar outfit laid out on the bed. It was her favorite red blouse with a sharply tailored blazer and black pants. Lexa smirked when Lena frowned, “ that’s my blazer but it looks....”

Lexa nodded swiftly, “ I altered it slightly. Mom’s magic hasn’t made a reappearance yet but she told me how to modify it to suit our purposes. Kara said this outfit made you feel confident”

Lena arched an eyebrow, “ Kara?”

She glanced at her modified outfit and noted with a smirk that it was the outfit she wore the second time she had met Kara. Apparently she had made an impression.

Regina spoke up gently, “ Kara said you tend to dress more conservatively around your mother. The point of how we are dressed is to throw her off, make her defensive, rather than offensive. So we need to make sure you come across as confident and calm, not submissive and emotional.”

Lena nodded to indicate she understood as she carried the outfit back into the bathroom and closed the door. She shrugged off the robe she had worn and dressed quickly, making the necessary adjustments to her hair and make-up as well. Moments later, she left the bathroom feeling more confident. She glanced at the others and for the first time became aware of what they were wearing. She now knew what Regina meant when she referred to changing clothes as putting on their armor. Everyone looked different and it changed their entire demeanors as well.

Regina was wearing an outfit very similar to Lena’s. She wore a tight fitting royal purple blouse and a sharply tailored blazer identical to Lena’s. Her slacks were loose and ironed to perfection. Tall closed toe

heels added over an inch to Regina's height. Her makeup accentuated and slightly sharpened her features, making her look fierce. She looked like the queen she was.

Glancing at Clarke, Lena immediately noticed that the blonde was wearing dark cargo pants that fit snugly over her hips. She wore a black t shirt under a tight fitted leather jacket. The jacket was dual colored and the contrast was startling. her brown boots matched The left hand side was a deep blue with accented deep brown tones. The jacket had jagged lines where blue intersected with deep brown leather that dominated the right side. The blue and brown contrasted Clarke's features perfectly, making her sharp blue eyes stand out. She too looked confident, strong and fierce, every bit the leader and warrior Lena knew her to be.

It was Lexa whose appearance shocked her the most. Lexa was wearing a stiff, form fitting leather jacket that was black as night, and textured like the skin of an alligator. The popped collar was tall around her neck before creating a slight v as it wrapped itself around her shoulders and overlapped across her chest. Skin tight pants hugged her legs and tall combat boots with some heel added to her height as well. Lena easily recognized the outfit as the one Emma favored as the Dark One. Lexa looked very much like her blonde mother. Lena had noted upon meeting the green eyed brunette that she carried herself the same way Emma did as the Dark One but that was never more apparent than it was now, with her wearing the armored leathers of Dark Swan.

Lena's confidence grew as she glanced at the women beside her. She was indeed surrounded by fierce women who were doggedly determined to protect her. She felt safer and stronger in their presence. Lexa noted the shift in Lena's posture and nodded with a faint tint of amusement dancing in her eyes, " Ready?"

Lena nodded firmly, " As I'll ever be"

They headed to the elevator, walking together. Alex and Maggie joined them once they arrived on the floor. Alex was in her standard issue DEO uniform with her black leather jacket hanging loosely on her shoulders, her utility belt tight, loaded down with her weapons. Maggie was in her usual dark pants, dark shirt and black leather

jacket. Her badge hung on her hip beside her service weapon. Maggie whistled when she noticed the way everyone else was dressed, “ Are we going to an interrogation or war?”

Lexa’s tone was soft but commanding, “According to Emma, they are one and the same with Lillian Luthor. Best to look the part and be prepared for anything”

Alex nodded, “ Agreed. Underestimating Lillian would be a mistake. She would not have walked in here without a plan to escape if necessary. Exercise extreme caution.”

Alex glanced at Lena, “ Are you sure you can handle her Reyes?”

It took Lena a moment that Alex was addressing her, “ Yes. I can handle her Alex. I’ve handled her for 24 years.”

Alex evaluated her for a moment, “ You know we have your back right? No matter what she says to you, you are family now, and this family will always have your back”

Lena nodded but Alex wasn’t done, her expression matched the earnest tone in her voice, “ I know I’ve doubted you before, and god knows I tried so hard to keep Kara from you. I want you to know, I realize that was a mistake. Your father might have been a Luthor, but you never were. I am sorry for the way I have treated you. I judged you unfairly, and I want you to know, it won’t happen again.”

Lena fought back the tears at Alex’s apology, “ Thank you Agent Danvers, that means a lot to me”

Alex nodded firmly, “ I’ve got your back lil sis”

Lena arched a brow and Maggie slapped Lena on the back, startling her, “ Happy to have you in the fam Lena.”

Lena choked slightly on a chuckle, her eyes watering from the sting of Maggie’s hand, “ Thanks”

She managed to get her emotions under control and Alex flashed her a thumbs up. She stepped off to the side out of sight as the DEO agent posted outside the room waited for Alex’s signal.

Lexa nodded, "Follow us in. and remember, love is strength Lena. Your true family loves you, let their love give you strength."

" And I am just outside if you need me" Regina stated firmly.

Lena nodded firmly and watched in amazement as the women in front of her all slipped on the terse emotionless masks. Steeling herself and straightening her posture, she adopted the same indifferent air and nodded. The DEO Agent posted outside the door smirked as he swiftly opened the door and stepped aside. Alex and Maggie entered the room first, ignoring Lillian entirely as they swept into the room and took up their posts on either side of the door. Clarke winked at Lena as she followed a stoic Lexa into the room. Lena lifted her chin and followed them into the room, fighting back a grin at the flabbergasted look on Lillian's face at the blatant display of power they demonstrated. Lillian was heavily outnumbered both in physical strength and in wit. Lena stole a glance at the taller Luthor woman from the corner of her eye, noting that Lillian was assessing the situation, trying to slip her own mask into place but failing. She was openly gaping at the women in the room, and for the moment, was oblivious to the fact that it was her adopted daughter standing on the other side of the table.

Lena stood there patiently until Lillian's eyes swept over her, her eyebrows briefly arching in surprise as she noted the difference in how Lena carried herself from prior interactions. Lillian forced herself to relax back into the chair and adopt a more casual stance.

" Lena, I am glad you are alright. You weren't hurt were you?" she tossed a cold calculated glare at the women standing silently against the wall before returning her gaze to Lena, " I came here to ask for help rescuing you, but I was arrested and tossed in a cell instead. They didn't even bother to tell me whether or not you were alive."

Lena still didn't meet her gaze. She moved carefully, adopting the same mannerisms she used in business dealings. Lillian noted the shift in behavior with a frown. Lena shifted in the chair and Lexa approached lightly, handing her a file and Lexa's words reverberated in her skull again, *Your true family loves you, let their love be your strength .*

She could feel their strength as if it were a tangible thing, a shield that protected her from words that would ordinarily make her weak. They had given her strength, but they had given her so much more. She had courage in their presence, as well as the presence of mind to recognize Lillian's words for the falsehoods they were. Where her words had weakened Lena's resolve before, always leading her directly into Lillian's traps, now she was coolly indifferent. She had a family who loved and accepted her as she was, making it easier to sense Lillian's subtle attempt to manipulate her. Lena found she no longer desired the approval of the woman before her.

Lena made a show of flipping through the file, glancing at her mother's twisted creations before placing the file on the table and carefully laying out the pictures before Lillian. When she finished, she leaned back in her seat, her posture relaxed and smooth, betraying nothing of her thoughts or feelings. Lillian studied her for a moment before shifting uncomfortably under Lena's steady stare.

Lillian arched a brow before glancing at the photos. She tried desperately to keep her face an emotionless mask but Lena caught the flicker of fear in the woman's eyes before she managed to hide it. "What's this?" Lillian asked, her tone betraying her in spite of her attempts to sound indifferent.

Lena gave her a pointed look, "You tell me"

Lillian leaned forward earnestly, "Lena, I came here to save you, to protect you. Everything I've done, I've done to keep you safe. Surely you know that"

Lena's mask started to slip but Lexa and Clarke were suddenly beside her, Lexa's voice hard, "Agent Reyes asked you a question Mrs. Luthor. Given the seriousness of the charges you face, I suggest you answer her honestly"

Lillian started in surprise again and Lena fought to keep her mask in place. Lexa hadn't discussed Lena pretending to be an agent, but she knew, if this was going to work,, Lillian needed to believe the facade.

Lillian stared at her adopted daughter before chuckling, "Oh this is rich, my daughter, an agent of the DEO." She turned her anger on

Lena, “ How long Lena? How long have you been playing me for the fool?”

Lillian’s mask was failing, as Lena’s became more resolute. She didn’t react when Lillian reached across the table trying to grasp her hands in desperation. Instead Lena coldy pulled out of her grasp, easily robbing Lillian of the upper hand and demanding, “ These photos are of your creations. We know what they are, what you were creating.” She tapped each photo in turn, her finger landing on the photo of the real Hank Henshaw, “ These creations, this is your army of super soldiers, is it not?”

Lillian stared at her, her expression morphing rapidly, “ I did everything I could to protect you. I warned you, time and again of the threat they posed. You turned your back on me over and over again, and now it makes sense. The whole time, the wounded daughter act, you were plotting against me. You used me Lena”

The accusation struck Lena as incredibly ironic and it took a great deal of self control, and a gentle squeeze from Clarke to keep her mask firmly in place, “ When did you learn of the supersoldier threat? I’d say it was about fifteen years ago, given how long you’ve had Hank around. Where’d you get the metal compound to create them?”

Lillian was desperate. She was overwhelmed, she knew she had been made. She knew she had been outmatched. With a sigh, Lillian brushed the photos aside, before leaning towards Lena, “ I suppose there’s little point in keeping anything from you any longer. You seem determined to fight me every step of the way. I had hoped that perhaps if you understood the danger you are in, maybe you would see reason.”

Lena ignored the subtle dig at her, “ When did you learn of CSM’s plot?”

Lillian stiffened visibly and whispered, “ gods, you know more than I gave you credit for, and yet, you still insist on this foolish infatuation with aliens coexisting with us. Do you know, about your supposed friend? Do you know who Kara truly is?”

Lena let the smirk tugging at her lips spread as she arched a brow at Lillian. Lillian shook her head, her disappointment in Lena painfully obvious, “ You’re an even bigger fool than your mother.”

Lexa’s voice was firm, brokering now argument as she slammed a hand on the table, causing Lillian to jump back, eyeing the younger Swan- Mills with a hint of fear “ Answer the question”

Lillian shot her a disdainful look, “ I learned of the syndicate through Lex. He stumbled into a meeting in Lionel’s office one night, having no idea what he had walked in on. Lionel was absolutely furious. Being the curious young man he was, he snuck back into his father’s office despite Lionels warnings and discovered the truth. Lex killed him for betraying his species, selling us out to beings who care nothing for us”

Maggie arched her brow, “ Lena’s father was a member of the syndicate?”

“The original one, yes. He worked directly with CSM and Mulder’s father. I learned what he was involved with only after Lionel died. Lex told me, when I questioned his shift in focus. Obviously, I was in shock, but agreed that we had a duty to protect the planet at all costs”

She glanced at Lena, “ It’s a sense of duty I have tried to impart upon my daughter, and it would seem, I partially succeeded, she just seems to be under the impression that her duty is to oppose me, no matter the cost to her family or humanity.”

Alex spoke firmly, “ The difference between Cadmus and the DEO is that the DEO has evolved beyond paranoia and fear”

“ The difference between Cadmus and the DEO,” Lillian corrected, “ Is that Cadmus is willing to do what it takes to protect the planet and we understand that this is a fight between the human race and aliens while the DEO carelessly allowed an alien to not only infiltrate their organization but twist it into something it was never meant to be”

She glanced at Alex, “ There was a time when Cadmus and the DEO worked together. But the moment that imposter took over, the

alliance between Cadmus and the DEO failed. Since then I have taken to more extreme methods to protect our planet from our alien invaders. Can you really blame me? I did what I had to do, no more, no less. I won't apologize for it, so if that's why you are here, you are wasting your time."

Lena cleared her throat, "Are you finished?"

Lillian frowned and nodded, pushing herself back against her chair, "Yes Lena, I'm through"

"Good. We didn't bring you here to discuss your motivations. We brought you here because we want to know how you managed to create your own army of supersoldiers"

Lillian shook her head and Lena laughed, "Don't bother lying to me Lillian. I know what Hank Henshaw is, what you made Agent Jeremy Danvers into. Do not sit there and think you can insult my intelligence by lying to me. I know why you did it, I need to know how. And where are they now?"

Lillian narrowed her eyes, "What is it to you?"

Lena sidestepped the question, "You modeled them after the original super soldiers, but found it difficult to achieve. The originals, the metal is the sentient being, making it next to impossible to stop them, but yours... yours are far more... robotic. They answer to you, you wield them, but they are also more vulnerable"

Lillian sighed, "Tell me why you want to know Lena, and I will gladly share that knowledge with you. You should know by now, you can't intimidate me into talking."

Clarke growled low in her throat, her muscles rippling under her tight jacket, bones cracking and shifting as she stepped forward, letting Lillian see the fierce glow in her eyes, "She may not be able to make you talk, but let me assure you, I can" her voice was guttural and harsh, and Lena briefly wondered which creature's voice she was using. Lexa put a restraining hand on Clarke's arm, "Hod op Klarke. Chil Au"

Lillian narrowed her gaze on Lexa, “ You wear the armor of Dark Swan, and speak a strange guttural language I’ve never heard of, alien though I’m guessing. So, what are you?”

Lexa’s posture remained ramrod straight and her eyes danced dangerously, “ I’m the Dark Swan’s daughter, Leksa. Perhaps you’ve heard of me. Ai laik Heda kom thontin Kru.”

Lillian glared at her, “ If you are going to invade our planet, the least you could do is speak our language”

Lexa smirked, “ I am a grounder, an inhabitant of the planet earth in every way one can be. Your ignorance is astounding Mrs. Luthor. Your fear and paranoia blinds you to the real dangers. I am no mere human but I am most certainly not alien. You’ve seen what my mothers can do. You have no idea what their children are capable of. I too was a Dark One. I am the commander of thirteen clans and their armies. I have laid waste to entire nations, and I have united them. Your so called Cadmus does not intimidate me, nor do you.”

Lexa stood tall and proud, ignoring the glare Lillian directed at her, “ What you fail to realize Lillian is that you are weak, your fear and ignorance robs you of your strength, it isolates you. You hide behind pretty words and false smiles but I see right through it. You have no strength of your own, so you seek to create power and bend it to your will, but you fail time and again because you are incapable of understanding the power you wield.”

Lexa leaned over the table and met Lillian's glare head on and Lillian flinched, “ Now, if you would stop trying to gain some semblance of control over us, you would realize, we are here to offer you a lifeline. You created these super soldiers to combat a very real threat, but alone, they can never succeed, and neither can you. But if you would cooperate with us, you would realize we are offering our assistance in dealing with this threat. You came here claiming you wanted to align yourself with the DEO. We are now offering you exactly that.”

Lillian’s features softened and Lena watched her process Lexa’s words. The woman was analyzing them, looking for the lie. Her eyes took on the glint Lena easily identified as Lillian plotting a way to regain control of the situation but Lena beat her to it, “ Whatever you

are plotting, give it up. You do not have any leverage, you do not dictate the terms here. Cadmus is a terrorist organization and will be dismantled. You will be formally charged, convicted and sent to prison. Your only option is to cooperate with us. There is no escape hatch this time Lillian.”

“ I am your mother, you could at least address me with the respect I deserve” Lillian snapped, her eyes flashing with anger and a hint of something else. Lena was startled when she recognized the brief flash of pain in Lillian’s eyes.

Lena shook her head, “ My mother’s name is Monica Julieta Reyes. You never were my mother Lillian.”

Lena saw Lillian’s defenses crumble. Lena could see exactly how much those words had stung and the depth of the pain in Lillian’s eyes caught her off guard. She had always assumed that Lillian was lying when she claimed to love her. The elder Luthor’s shoulders slumped in defeat. Lena caught the grief in her eyes as she stared at Lena for a long moment before staring at the table. She seemed to reach a decision and began to speak, her tone void of her usual arrogance or pride, “ Cadmus was founded in response to the discovery of the syndicate. When we learned of the existence of super soldiers, we immediately worked to replicate their work. I wouldn’t go as far as to say that Cadmus has an army of supersoldiers. You are right, they are more vulnerable, but that’s because they still have their humanity. We used the iron compound that destroys them to help them maintain their humanity. It weakens them just enough.”

“ Where are they now?”

Lillian sighed, “ I have several strike teams hunting down the syndicate as we speak. We tracked them across several different states. They have sites all over this country. We’ve destroyed over half of their facilities.”

Lena nodded, sliding a piece of paper across the desk to Lillian, “ I want the passwords to Cadmus’s servers, databases, everything.”

Lillian nodded, as she took the pen and followed Lena’s instructions. She passed the page back and held onto the pen when Lena tried to

grab it from her, her expression matching the earnestness in her voice, “ I know what you think of me Lena. you’ve made it abundantly clear over the years that you despise me. I know I’ve lied to you, time and again. I’ve manipulated you, used you, used your insecurities against you as if they were weapons. I’ve been heartless and cruel. And I’ve never supported you. I’m sorry. I failed you in every way as a mother, and I understand why you want nothing to do with me.”

Lena stared at the blonde in surprise, arching a brow, waiting for the catch. Lillian raised her hands placatingly as much as the chain holding her to the desk would allow, “ There’s no angle here Lena. I failed you, I failed Lex. I know it’s far too late for apologies and reconciliation. You wouldn’t believe me if I offered them so I won’t. But I need you to know, whether you see me as your mother or not, I have always seen you as my daughter, and I do love you. I don’t love well, but for you, I will honestly try to do better. You want my help? You have it. You want Cadmus, it’s yours. The passwords and codes are there. The retina scanners and other tech will grant you access to you, it’s been programmed to do so. If you want to change it like you did L Corp, go for it. If anyone can take a failure and turn it into success it’s you. But if you want it disbanded, the soldiers either imprisoned or destroyed, I won’t fight you on it. I’m done. It’s clear to me that my efforts to protect you have failed, and the only way to protect you now is to surrender. So I surrender, no games, no gimmicks, no back door plots. Whatever you need, it’s yours. The Luthor empire belongs to you.”

Lena bit her lip, staring at the woman. She didn’t know how to respond so Lillian addressed Alex, “ In the spirit of full cooperation, you should probably know, Fox Mulder works for Cadmus.”

Everyone paused and stared at her in shock, but Lena simply shook her head, “ I suspected as much”

“Yes, well you were always quicker on your feet than I ever gave you credit for.” Lillian sighed, “ He’s not a super soldier, he’s just been funneling us information when he felt that the FBI or the DEO was failing to adequately address a threat.”

“ Why tell us now?” Alex asked, her eyes narrowed in suspicion.

Lillian nodded, “ As a sign of good faith. I am done fighting you. It’s clear that all my efforts up to this point are wasted unless I work with you. All I want is for my daughter to be safe, and CSM and the super soldiers stopped. I don’t trust aliens, I doubt I ever will, but the biggest threat to this planet right now is CSM’s new syndicate. So I’m offering my full support and cooperation.”

Lena nodded, satisfied that she had accomplished what she intended with Lillian, even if she was surprised at how swiftly Lillian had caved. She stood stiffly, her legs threatening to give way. She had nearly forgotten about her cancer while seated across from Lillian, but now the symptoms were rearing their ugly head again. Lexa caught her elbow and steadied her easily as Lillian instinctively rose to her feet. Alex and Maggie moved to force her back to her seat but Clarke shook her head, motioning Lillian to sit down. The woman immediately complied, “ Lena, are you alright? What’s wrong?” Lena could hear the alarm in Lillian’s voice and paused. She glanced at the woman and saw raw fear and concern in steely blue eyes. She swallowed deciding to take the risk, “ Are you familiar with the chips CSM is so fond of?”

The color drained from Lillian’s face, “ Tell me you don’t have one”

Lena laughed sardonically, “ I wish I could. One moment I was entering my apartment, the next I was hit over the head. The next thing I remember was waking up tied to a chair in CSM’s office, with a chip in my neck. Then I get rescued, help save the world from the spartan virus, only to discover the chip was deactivated and now I have cancer.”

To her complete surprise, Lillian was crying. The woman with the iron will was reaching for her across the table, tears spilling from her eyes, her voice broken and full of desperation “ I can help. I know how to manipulate the chips.” She glances around the room, “ please, I can save her. Let me help”

Alex shook her head and Lillian pleaded, “ I understand your distrust of me, but it’s not a trick, I swear it. Mulder’s fine. Haven’t you noticed that his symptoms are practically non existent? His cancer is benign. I know how to manipulate the chips to eradicate the cancer. Let me do this.”

Maggie shook her head, “ Why should we trust you. After all you’ve done? Why should we believe you for even a minute?”

Lena heard the door behind them open and Regina’s voice wafted into the room, “ Because she is still a mother. A poor one, clearly, but a mother nonetheless.”

Regina stepped into the room and gave Lillian a hard look, “ You will help us. But if you even think about attempting to betray us, I will rip your heart from your chest and crush it myself. Understood?”

Lillian nodded eagerly, latching onto the opportunity to help, “ Absolutely. If it makes you more comfortable, keep the cuffs on, and let your techs do it. I can walk them through it verbally. I just... Lena has to live, she’s all I have left”

Regina nodded to Alex, “ If you don’t trust her, trust me. Her offer is genuine.”

Alex sighed, and moved to free Lillian from the desk. She freed one hand and ordered Lillian to place her hands behind her back. Lillian complied immediately, her eyes watching Lena with considerable concern, “ What stage is it?”

“ Stage three as of this morning”

“ Christ” Lillina cursed, “ I imagine your mother is faring no better?”

Lena shook her head, her own eyes becoming glassy, “ She’s worse off than I am, Agent Scully too. I... I can’t lose mom... We just found each other and now... I’m going to lose her all over again”

Lillians expression morphed once more to grim determination, “ You won’t. I won’t allow it”

Lena stared at her, “ You hate her”

Lillian shook her head, “ You love her. She’s your mother. My opinion of her does not matter. You love her, and I love you, so I swear, I will do whatever it takes to save her Lena.”

Alex nudged Lillian to the door, “ Then let’s go make good on that

promise, there isn't much time"

Lillian nodded firmly, glancing at Regina, " You may want to question Agent Mulder. The last time we spoke, he hinted that he knew where the syndicate was hiding out."

Regina nodded, glancing at Lena, " Go tell Emma, then go rest." Lena started to protest but Regina gave her a hard look, " no arguments. You've done more than enough today. Rest. let us do this. You will be back on your feet soon, but until then trust me"

Lillian watched their interaction with more than mild interest. Lena nodded, deciding there was no point in arguing with her. She caught the grateful look Lillian shot at Regina as she left the room. Her mind was reeling from the implications of the conversation with her adopted mother. Lillian had gone from fighting tirelessly for the upper hand to suddenly conceding that she had lost. It had felt very much like the first several times Lena had actually successfully beaten Lillian at a game of chess. Victory against Lillian in chess was rare. Today felt like another victory, but at the same time, it was a disconcerting feeling. Lillian had been outmatched from the very beginning of the encounter and she knew it. Knowing she had lost Lena's trust and affection had backed her into a corner and forced her to concede. Lillian needed Lena more than Lena needed her.

Shaking off the anxiety that lingered after every interaction with Lillian, she found Emma in her mother's hospital room, talking to her softly. Monica was awake, though she looked exhausted. Her eyes lit up briefly when she spotted Lena walking into the room before noting the stiffness in Lena's movements with a frown. Emma stood swiftly, " I'd better go help the others." Lena caught her before she got far, " Apparently you need to question Mulder. He's been working for Cadmus and supposedly knows where CSM is."

Emma nodded sharply, " On it. Go sit with your mother, you look like hell"

Lena smiled tiredly and Emma gave her a quick hug, pressing an affectionate kiss to her hair, " We will figure this out Lena. don't give up"

Lena shook her head firmly, in spite of the exhaustion, “ Never”

“ Now go sit with your mom, she could use some company and you could use some rest”

Lena headed back into her mother's room to find Monica struggling to sit up in the bed. Lena shook her head, “ you’re as stubborn as I am”

Monica chuckled lightly, “ Where did you think you got it from?”

Lena gently pushed her mother back against her pillow and grabbed the remote to raise the bed. Monica patted the narrow space beside her and Lena eagerly sat next to her, leaning back against the raised portion of the bed. Exhaustion took over as Monica murmured, “ Rest. We’ll talk later”

Kara was struggling. Her fear was getting the best of her inspite of her usual bottomless optimism. They had been working on the chips for hours with little progress. Raven had managed to get through all fifteen of CSM’s firewalls and was now searching for the files on the chips. Raven’s expression was grimly determined. Emma had left a little over an hour ago to check on Monica and Dana. Kara missed the steady calm Emma exuded. She seemed confident that they would figure it out. Winn was growing frustrated, but Raven was stone faced. Kara glanced at Raven. The younger Swan Mills seemed to actually enjoy the challenge she had been presented with. Raven’s expression was serious, but there was a hint of a smile in her features.

Kara sighed heavily and turned back to her assignment which was the painstaking task of decrypting the files Raven had found on his server. She wasn’t having much luck. So far she had managed to decrypt a handful of files, and none of them were particularly illuminating. She had a feeling the file she was working on now had at least something useful on it, because it was proving far more difficult to crack.

Kara’s super senses were in overdrive as she tried to hear the first

hint of how Lillian's interrogation was going. The room she was being held in was lined in lead so she couldn't hear anything happening in the room. She gave up. Moments later she heard a door down the hall open and heard chains rattling and shuffling feet. Glancing up she spotted none other than Lillian Luthor being led towards the lab. She shuffled her feet awkwardly as she walked and to Kara's great surprise, she looked small. The woman being led towards them looked nothing like the powerful woman whose presence commanded every room she entered. She entered the room with her head down, being led by Alex who seemed as puzzled by the development as Kara was. Lillian let Alex guide her to a chair and gently called for Raven, who was so absorbed in her task she hadn't even heard them enter. Lexa, Clarke, Maggie and Regina filed into the room behind Alex, gaining everyone's attention. Everyone but Raven, who was so focused, she was apparently immune to distraction. It ended up taking Regina calling Raven's name for her to snap to attention, "Yes? Heard my name"

Regina smirked, "Yes, on the third try"

Raven blushed, "Sorry, I was in the zone. I'm so close to cracking his cipher. Once I do that, everything will automatically decrypt." Raven noticed their guest, "Um..."

Regina gestured Lillian over. The blonde studied the computer with wide eyes, "My people never got that close. How long have you been working on this?"

Raven glanced at the clock, "Four hours, apparently."

The admiration on Lillian's face was obvious. She glanced at Regina, "Yours?" The compliment remained unspoken, but it was clear Lillian was impressed.

Regina nodded, her eyes glinting with pride. Lillian nodded, "Once you crack that, I can reprogram the chips."

Raven arched an eyebrow, "Really?" she glanced at her mother, her distrust obvious. Regina nodded, "Lena is getting worse... Lillian says she can help. If she can save us even a little time, it's worth it."

Fresh tears appeared in Lillian's eyes and Kara felt her heart start to melt. She despised Lillian for a number of reasons, the largest being the way she had treated Lena. Lillian glanced at Kara then her computer, " You don't actually need to decrypt those files. Cadmus has them already. I can walk you through how to backdoor your way into Cadmus' servers"

Winn glanced up, " Okay, I'll do it" he glanced at Kara, nodding, " Go. I've got this"

Kara's brow furrowed not understanding what Winn is telling her to do. Lexa gently grasps her arm as she clarifies, " Go see her Kara. You've been distracted and worried for hours. Go check on her yourself. We can handle this. "

Kara nodded gratefully and excused herself from the room but Lillian called after her. Kara paused at the door and met the woman's gaze. There was no hostility between them anymore and it was a disconcerting feeling. Lillian held her gaze and stated softly, " Take care of her please... she's pushing herself too hard"

Kara bit her lip and nodded, " You know I will"

Lillian swallowed, " I'm..."

Kara raised her hand stopping Lillian before she could finish. Kara wasn't ready for the shock to her system an apology from Lillian would bring, "Words won't do anyone a whole lot of good right now. Focus on doing what you can, so we can do what we do best and stop this bastard.we can deal with everything else when she's safe. Deal?"

Lillian swallowed and stated hoarsely, " Deal."

Kara left the room as Lillian sat down to work, Alex and Maggie hanging over her shoulder watching her every move closely.

The closer Kara drew to Agent Reyes' hospital room, the more the ache in her chest eased. She could hear Lena's heartbeat and it had slowed to a rate Kara associated with sleep. She stood outside the door for a moment, gathering her courage before she glanced up and caught Monica watching her with a gentle smile. The older Reyes

motioned her into the room and Kara opened the door as quietly as she could. Kara felt her anxiety settle the moment she stepped into the room. Monica gave her a nod, directing her to the chair closest to the bed. Kara sank into it, feeling a wave of exhaustion settle over her.

She hadn't realized how hard she was pushing herself. Being Kryptonian, she didn't need as much rest as humans did, but the last several weeks had taken a considerable toll on her. Between the Daxomite invasion, the spartan virus and the threats her friends and loved ones now faced, Kara had been running herself ragged trying to save everyone. And she felt useless. Both because there were limits to her strength and knowledge, and the fact that she was terrified of losing Lena.

Monica's hand landed on Kara's tight fist with a gentle squeeze, " She is alright Kara, just asleep. William's artifact is helping us both"

Kara nodded and Monica continued, " You two are running yourselves into the ground. You need rest. Stay for a while."

Kara nodded, shifting so she was sitting closer to them both. Monica gave her a smile, " Would you like to trade places with me, I'm rather tired of laying here. If you could help me to the chair..."

Kara's heart rate doubled, pounding in her ears at the suggestion. Monica was actually offering to let her lay next to Lena?

She had cuddled with Lena on her couch watching movies together a few times, but that was before either of them realized the extent of their feelings for each other. She wasn't sure how Lena would react to finding Kara beside her now. Monica waited patiently and finally, the desire to be beside Lena won out over her fear. She nodded and Monica carefully shifted so that her daughter was resting comfortably. Kara helped Monica to her feet. Easing her into the chair. Monica's legs threatened to give out but Kara's hold on her was firm. Monica gave her a smile as Kara released her.

Kara hesitated before sitting on the edge of the hospital bed. Lena was still sound asleep, but as soon as Kara leaned back and swung her legs up onto the bed as well, Lena shuffled closer, as if she

somehow sensed Kara's presence. She mumbled something under her breath, something that sounded suspiciously like Kara's name as her head found its way to Kara's shoulder, and her right arm and leg swung over Kara, tugging her closer. Kara's breath hitched and Monica chuckled lightly. Kara blushed furiously as she debated pulling away. Monica shook her head lightly, " Stay. You both will rest better if you are close by."

Kara swallowed and let Lena tug her even closer.

Monica watched them for a few moments, a wistful look on her face before stating softly, " She loves you, you know"

Kara nodded, " I love her too"

Monica sighed, " She's... afraid of her feelings. Afraid to be vulnerable with someone. She's been hurt so many times, abandoned by me..."

" She doesn't blame you for that. She knows you were protecting her"

" But that doesn't change the fact that when she needed me, I was not there. Even if you know it's for your own protection, it still creates brokenness. Brokenness that I can't undo, no matter how hard I try"

Kara swallows and nods, " I know."

Monica studied her for a moment, " Your parents?"

" Sent me away to save me. I watch my planet explode as the pod they sent me away in escaped"

Monica took Kara's hand, " So you understand, what it is to feel alone. Even when you have people around you, there's still a hole no one can fill"

Kara nodded, " I do."

" Be patient with her. She's... healing, slowly. She cares for you, deeply. But she's afraid"

" I am too. It's.. common, almost normal for people of the same

gender to love each other in that way here, but on Krypton... Romantic relationships in general were frowned upon. Relationships were more seen as alliances, for the sake of consolidating power or elevating one's position. Romance, was a distraction. Love was seen as weakness, and weakness for the same sex was frowned upon more than any other relationship."

Monica sighed, " It's still unpopular here as well amongst some circles. But Kara, in the end, none of that matters. What matters, is you love her, and she loves you. Don't let anyone or anything rob that from you. Believe me, it's not worth it."

Kara caught the flash of regret in Monica's eyes as she spoke and asked, " Agent Scully?"

Monica frowned, " We both wasted a lot of time out of fear. We caused each other needless pain. I have no doubt Emma and Regina would say the same of their relationship as well."

Monica glances at her daughter who has wrapped herself even closer to Kara, " I would hate to see you two repeat our mistakes. You love each other deeply. That's obvious. Don't feel like you have to fit in with social norms, or your relationship needs to evolve a certain way. Be open and honest with each other, and communicate your feelings clearly, don't bottle them in like I did. It hurts too much and it's too exhausting. Not to mention you begin to resent the person you love."

Monica's voice was raw with emotion, and Kara could sense that Monica believed it to be too late for her and Dana. she was dying, and whether she admitted it or not, Monica was giving up. Kara's heart went out to the brunette, and something powerful rose up in her, demanding to be heard, " Don't. I know what you are thinking Agent Reyes, and you are wrong. This is not the end for you."

Monica shook her head, " I am okay with it. I've faced death before. I am at peace"

" Lillian is downstairs working to save you." Kara argued and Monica's brow lifted in surprise, " Lillian Luthor is trying to save us?"

Kara nodded, her expression firm, " Lena got through to her, I don't

know how, I was helping with the chips while they interrogated her, but something in Lillian broke. She's... different. It's like... I don't know... she's..."

"She's like Mulder, she's realized she is going to lose Lena"

Kara shook her head, "If I hadn't seen her just now, I would share your reservations, but... I saw her. Something's different. There's a difference between her and Mulder. Their quests come first, but.. With Mulder, his quest is what drives him. That's truly number one for him. But Lillian... she told Lena she loves her, that she's done everything to protect her. And honestly... as misguided as that is, I believe her."

Monica eyed her, "You believe her"

Kara nodded, "I do. I think she's telling the truth. It's more than fear of losing her. It's... It's as if she realized her attempts to protect her did more harm than good and she just wants to undo the damage."

Monica shook her head, "Forgive me if I have my doubts"

Kara shrugged, "I don't blame you, Lena did not at first either. But Lillian told her that Lena loves you, therefore she would save you too. Would Mulder do that? Put someone else's needs first aside from saving them?"

Monica hesitated, "I honestly don't know. He never has."

Lena shifted in Kara's arms and mumbled, "Lillian confessed that he's been feeding them information for years"

Both Kara and Monica startled at Lena's sleepy interruption. Kara glanced down and saw Lena watching her with an unreadable expression. Kara debated pulling away, but Lena didn't move to distance herself, so Kara took the risk and remained where she was.

Monica leaned forward, "Go back to sleep darling, you haven't gotten near enough rest. I'm sorry we woke you. We can talk about everything else later"

Lena shifted and laid her head back on Kara's shoulder, her breathing

slowly evening back out, “ You didn’t wake me. I just... I can’t seem to stay asleep. My mind won’t let me”

Kara nodded her agreement. She understood Lena’s restlessness. Sleep refused to come easily for her either. Monica nodded to Kara as she insisted, “Forget Lillian and Mulder for now. Rest, both of you. I’m right here, and I promise, I’ll wake you if anything happens that you can do something about”

Lena looked ready to argue but her exhaustion won out as she laid back down carefully, suddenly hesitant to be close to Kara now that they were awake and conscious of each other. Monica shifted so that she was comfortable in the chair and offered them a soft smile. She seemed relieved to see them together. Kara remembered their earlier conversation and gave Monica a stern look that states she knew what Monica was doing and why. Monica was still worried she wouldn’t survive, and she was trying to ensure her daughter was taken care of in her absence. Kara swallowed as she watched Monica carefully. Lena spoke up, apparently on the same page as Kara, though Kara hadn’t verbalized her observations. “ Kara’s right mom. You are not going anywhere. Don’t even think about giving up”

“ I’m not darling.” Lena started to argue but Monica spoke firmly, “ Rest. We will talk about it later. Unlike you two, I know my limits, and I’ve not been wandering around dead on my feet.”

Kara nodded and shifted so that she was lying beside Lena. The brunette hesitated for a moment longer before her desire to be close to Kara won out. She looked at Kara, her smoky hazel eyes exposing her vulnerability as her eyes asked for permission. Kara gave her a slight nod and tried not to smile at the way Lena was eagerly wrapping herself around the Kryptonian once more, whispering, “ Is this okay?”

Kara found it difficult to speak so she nodded and tugged Lena closer instead. She pressed a kiss to her hair and sighed in contentment. Lena’s heart beat steadily and Kara tuned everything else out around her, letting the steady rhythm finally lull her to sleep.

Notes for the Chapter:

So.. thoughts? I know Lillian is an asshole, and it may seem like she's playing more games.. but.. I had to rewrite the portion with her a few times. The character just wasn't happy with my intended portrayal of her. the next chapter actually dips into her head for a bit, so maybe that will help... but that's next week.

honestly, the more I study her, the more Lillian on the show reminds me of first season Regina Mills, caught up in her own shit, trying to protect herself and her interests, blinded to the pain she is causing her child. that doesn't justify her behavior in the slightest and she obviously has some work to do if her sudden change of heart is going to have any real lasting impact.

also, what do you guys think of the story weaving at this point? is it believable yet? I think all four shows are pretty entwined at this point, lore and relationship wise... but I would love to hear your input. also, dont forget to send me prompts, it helps get things moving again when I get stuck.

20. Lillian

Notes for the Chapter:

Notes: Chapter switches between Lillian and Monica's perspective. for those wondering, YES Lillian's had a true change of heart, but she's still a snarky stuck up asshole, so expect that to remain the same. But my muse is convinced she bears similarities to first- third season OUAT Regina and so... please give her a chance. the characters have decided she deserves one.

Something in her broke. Lena's words rang out clearly in her mind, reverberating in her soul. “ *You were never my mother.* ” It wasn't the first time Lillian heard those words from Lena. It was however, the first time Lena had spoken them with such conviction. Until then, Lillian had always assumed there was time, time to repair their relationship, time to fix things between them. Time to demonstrate that she truly did love her daughter, time to bridge the ever growing rift. But hearing those words come from Lena while they were facing the greatest threat they had ever known sent a chill through Lillian's spine.

Her daughter was paying for her own selfishness. She hadn't shielded her or protected her as she should have. She had resented her daughter from the moment they met, blaming her for Lionel's indiscretions. When Lex died, Lillian had become obsessed with her hatred of aliens, failing to realize that she was steadily building a wall between her and Lena. Seeing her daughter still fighting for people Lillian deemed to be her enemies while weak and exhausted, surrounded by people who supported her without expectations was a startling contrast to their own relationship with Lena.

In that moment, seeing Lena's resolve, any illusions that Lena would ever see things the way she did fell apart and it didn't matter to her anymore. For the first time in years, she saw things clearly. She saw her daughter, once again reaching out to her, inspite of everything she had done, offering the chance to make things right.

But more than anything, she wanted Lena in her life, more than revenge on CSM, more than eliminating any threat to humanity. Suddenly, none of it mattered in the face of knowing her daughter was thoroughly convinced that Lillian did not love her.

She lost the will to fight after that. She gave up the pretense, surrendering control. Cadmus no longer mattered to her. Maintaining her pride was a waste of time. She gave in and cooperated completely. The shift confused everyone in the room, Lillian included. She understood their hesitance to trust her, she had never once been trustworthy. They had no reference in dealing with this side of her, so she excused their disbelief and spoke calmly, honestly, making a point to allow herself to be vulnerable. She had no illusions that she could repair the damage between them, but at the very least, she could do everything in her power to make it right.

The first glimmer of hope was crushed under the weight of the realization that her daughter had not only been kidnapped, but now had a faulty chip that was causing cancer to spread rapidly. Her daughters paler than normal appearance suddenly made sense. Lillian's fragile control over her emotions shattered, and she began to weep for her daughter. Everything she had ever feared was now being realized and it was entirely her doing.

Everyone tensed, ready for a fight when she shot to her feet in an effort to reach Lena, momentarily forgetting her chains until she was yanked to a stop. She immediately sat back down, apologizing profusely through her tears, watching Lena's new family fuss over her. Seeing her daughter surrounded by people who had immediately welcomed her and protected her eased the ache enough for her to remember that she had the coding for the chips since Cadmus had replicated the technology to control their supersoldiers. When she revealed this, understandably, the DEO agents doubted her intentions in offering her help with reactivating the chips.

She was relieved when Regina entered the room and spoke for her, "Because she's still a mother. A poor one, clearly, but a mother nonetheless"

Lillian had swallowed back her emotions, fighting to keep herself under control. Regina's threat against her life was unnecessary. She

had no intention of harming her daughter, or Monica Reyes. She meant it when she promised to save everyone involved. Her pride and stubbornness had cost her everything. The only way to redeem herself in the eyes of her daughter was to make it right, without strings attached, had gotten her nowhere. She was glad Lena had a family. Her daughter had been incredibly lonely for years, and Lillian, for all her stubbornness and selfishness was relieved that someone had stepped in to fill the gap she had created.

She pleaded with Kara to protect her and Kara eyed her carefully. The Kryptonian seemed to believe her as well and Lillian watched her follow Lena with a sigh of relief.

Moments later, she found herself seated in a chair, working beside several DEO agents and the Swan Mills family on the chips. Lillian could feel two of them watching her as she worked. Her hands trembled as she typed, struggling to get her emotions under control now that she had unleashed them for the world to see. Regina waved the agents away and sat beside her, “ stop.”

Lillian paused, “ I have to do this.. I can’t...”

Regina gently shoved the mouse and keyboard away from Lillian forcing her to look at the brunette. Regina’s eyes were warm, full of compassion, “ you can’t help her unless you get yourself under control Lillian.”

Lillian swallowed, trying to regain control over the emotions she had suppressed for so long. She could feel the brunette watching her carefully and she glanced at her, “ why are you being so kind to me?”

Regina sighed, “ How much do you know about me?”

Lillian shook her head, “ not much, you are Dark Swan’s partner, her true love? That means something in the world you come from... but aside from that, not much”

Regina chuckled, “ well that’s refreshing.” her expression grew grim, “ I wasn’t... always.. This. In my universe, I was the Evil Queen”

Lillian arched a brow at her and Regina nodded, “ I know, that’s a

hard pill to swallow. Your world reduced my story to that of a fairytale, but in my world, I was hated and feared. I brought everyone here under a dark curse... I was entirely caught up in revenge.”

Regina ran her fingers through her short hair, “ I adopted Emma’s son, I had no idea of course whose child I had adopted, and for the first few years, my time with him was peaceful. But he grew and changed, but the town and everyone in it remained the same. He noticed and we grew apart. I was so focused on protecting what I had built, that I failed to realize I was losing him. He ran away and found Emma, bringing her back to Storybrooke, and I nearly destroyed what was left of my relationship with him because I was afraid.”

Lillian listened carefully, trying to understand what Regina was telling her.

Regina sighed, “ I was you once Lillian, a very long time ago. I nearly lost my son because I was so wrapped up in myself, in my cause. I nearly missed out on the opportunity to have a family, to be loved and accepted, to build a family of my own. But I was given a second chance. Emma was the first person to see past my anger and see who I could be. She gave me a chance to fix things with my son. She took a chance, and fought for me.”

Lillian stared at her hands, listening to Regina. The woman beside her sighed, “ Lillian, this is your second chance. Take it from someone who’s been in your shoes, don’t let this opportunity pass you by. Don’t drown in your own guilt and shame and forget to accept the hand you’ve been offered.”

Lillian glanced at Regina in surprise, “ What are you saying?”

“ I ‘m saying, you have an opportunity here. Don’t waste it on regrets. Yes, you have failed Lena in every way imaginable. No, you can’t undo any of it. What you can do, is save your daughter. What you can do, is make damn sure she knows you are here for her from now on, no matter what. You can make sure she knows, everything else is secondary now, your job as a mother comes first from now on.”

Lillian nodded, “ how long did it take to fix things with your son?”

Regina gave her a sympathetic smile, “ years. We still have issues to work through. But over time... with help and guidance from Emma and her family, I was able to repair things With my son.”

Regina seemed lost in her own memories before her brown eyes met Lillian's sharp blue ones, “ Rumplestiltskin taunted me, back at the beginning of my journey, told me maybe one day, if I was lucky, I would be invited for dinner, implying that even that was out of reach. But then, months later, I was invited to dinner. And over time... My enemies became my family and that's when I finally felt happy.”

Regina paused, glancing around the room, and Lillian saw the joy and disbelief in her eyes, “ sometimes, it occurs to me, what I have now, and I still have a hard time wrapping my head around it, this incredible gift I've been given. After everything I've been through, everything I've done, that I have a family to call my own... It's the most precious gift you can receive, and in many ways, it was a gift I gave myself”

Her gaze returned to Lillian, “ Start small Lillian, and be consistent. Save your daughter, accept what she offers you, make it clear that you support her. I too am an adopted mother, I too thought there was no way I could compete with the birth mom. But Emma ended up being more than allies and co parents. Yes, she's the love of my life now... but I was surprised to find that she is also an incredible friend.”

Lillian swallowed, and took a steadying breath, “ Thank you. I needed a little hope”

Regina chuckled, “ Yes well, I am a member of a family known for their hope speeches.”

Lillian pulled the keyboard and mouse back to her as Regina gave her shoulder a squeeze. Lillian returned to her task with a clear head and was able to pull up the files they needed just as Raven gave a shout of victory, “ We're in!”

Lillian nodded, “ Okay, I have the files you need.”

Raven grinned, “ let me send you the access code, you get in there and reactivate the chips. I am going to pull everything I can from his server.”

Lillian managed a small smile. Regina’s hand was on her shoulder, steadying her, giving her support. She realized what the brunette was doing. She was reminding Lillian that she wasn’t alone. She had support, someone who saw her potential and was going to stand by her on her road to redemption. A wave of gratitude swept over her as she realized that REgina was right, she had been given a gift. A gift she would not throw away.

It took a moment to type in the code and then lillian set to work, Kara hovering over her shoulder, watching every line of code Lillian typed. Winn monitored her progress on his computer, catching mistakes before they became a problem. Her focus only sharpened as they progressed. When she reached the final line of code she hesitated. Winn checked it all once more before giving her a thumbs up, “ I can’t see anything wrong”

Raven glanced at her in surprise and Lillian hurried to clarify, “ Double check it for me? Please? We can’t afford to get even a single character wrong”

Raven accepted her explanation and Lillian rose from her chair stiffly, allowing her to view the double screens. One contained the code to reactivate the chips, the other contained Lillian’s attempt to do exactly that. Raven eyes flitted back and forth between the screens for several moments before she glanced at Lillian and nodded, “ Not a single mistake. Well done Lillian.”

Alex frowned at Raven for the compliment but Raven shrugged, “ What? I can’t complete 20 pages of code without a single mistake. I’m allowed to be impressed.”

Lillian waved Raven off, grateful for the recognition, but unwilling to further strain her already difficult relationship with Kara’s sister.

Winn gave Lillian a half smile, “ I’m in the software of the chips. I’ve managed to shut them off temporarily so we can get the whole code in at once. Then we reactivate it all at once. Any other way is too

risky.”

Lillian swallowed, “ Won’t it being off hurt them?”

He shook his head, “ The cancer is already accelerating at an unprecedented rate. Shutting the chips down entirely won’t change anything. Playing around with code while they are on however? That could very well have unsavory effects.”

Lillian accepted his explanation and hurried to transfer her code into the software program running the chips. Raven and Winn monitored her progress to ensure nothing went wrong. Finally, after another final check, Winn muttered, “ Here goes nothing”

And hit enter. The screens filled with code immediately and Raven stared at it, “ It’s rewriting coding for their cells. That’s... insane. Where did this technology originally come from again?”

Lillian shook her head, “ The metal structure of the chips are fragments of the artefacts William has.”

At everyone’s startled looks she waved them off, “ Yes I know about William. I pose no threat to him. He’s working to save my daughter, and as I’ve told you, you have my full cooperation”

“ You’ve known about William this whole time?” Emma’s eyes were narrowed dangerously, “ How?”

Lillian pointed to Raven’s computer, “ We accessed his server. CSM had several files on what he called star children. William was one of hundreds of such children.”

“ What did you intend to do with such information?” Alex’s tone was dark and accusing.

Lillian sighed, “ Look, I know what you think of me, and I completely understand why. I’ve been horrible to my daughter, and I have done unforgivable things. But these are children. Most are half human, half something else. They need to be protected. We obtained their files, located them, and put the ones in danger in homes where they could live semi normal lives, often with alien parents.”

“ You despise aliens, why would you help them, give them children only to rip them away later?” Alex was angry and Lillian shook her head, “ You are referring to the ship incident?”

“ And the medusa virus, and your other plots. You helping children with alien dna while demonizing adults with the same makes no sense.”

“ Does it make any more sense than you hunting down aliens with the help of aliens?”

Lillian asked, shaking her head in frustration, “ Look, I helped them because many of them end up in foster care, as runaways or horribly neglected or abused. Either, they have a parent like Dana Scully who loves them enough to give them away, thinking it will protect them, or they have a human parent who is entirely ill equipped to deal with the challenges of caring for a hybrid child.”

Explaining her motivations was difficult. Lillian had never really thought about her desire to protect star children as in conflict with her larger mission of protecting earth from aliens. She glanced at Alex, “ To be honest, learning about those children... meeting some of them? They reminded me of four year old Lena when she first arrived in our home. She was so lost, so vulnerable. I had two gifted children and I failed them both. I wanted to at least make sure these children ended up in the care of someone who would do what I was unable to. I can't undo the damage done to Lena. but I could make sure kids like William had homes where they were loved and protected, and their potential was freely explored. The thought that it conflicted with the rest of my work never occurred to me.”

Alex studied her for a long moment before giving her a nod, “ Yeah, we were always out of our depth where Kara was concerned. We did our best... but... I know I limited her in a lot of ways.”

Lillian nodded, “ But at least she had a loving home where she was accepted and protected. Most children weren't. So I removed the ones who were worst off and had them placed with new families, often families with parents who were biologically similar.”

“ So William...” Emma asked, her tone still hard, distrusting.

Lillian shook her head, “ You placed him well. His family adored him. I checked in occasionally, from a distance but there was no need to interfere.”

Lillian cocked her head at Emma, “ Weren’t you supposed to be questioning Mulder?”

Emma nodded sheepishly, “ Yes, but I needed to make sure....”

“ That I wasn’t lying, that I didn’t have something nefarious up my sleeve? I know I have done nothing to warrant your trust, but Lena’s life is on the line. That’s all I care about. My daughter thinks I despise her, and there’s a chance she could die believing that. I can’t let that be how things end between us.”

Emma glanced at her partner and Regina’s eyes communicated with Emma gently. Emma relaxed, “ Fine, I’ll go talk to him. What do you think I will learn from him?”

Lillian frowned, “ CSM is his birth father. When Mulder went into hiding, CSM tracked him down, tried to bring him into the fold. Mulder refused, but managed to keep track of CSM’s movements. He hinted a few weeks ago that he had a location on the new syndicate. But the only person that he will likely trust with that information is Dana.”

Emma nodded, “ Then I will swing by the infirmary.” Emma hesitated before adding, “ If you would like to sit with Lena for a bit... You’ll need to be cuffed and escorted by agents, but...”

It took a moment for Emma’s offer to sink in. by then alex had started to protest only to be silenced by Regina and Maggie. Alex nodded grimly, “ fine, but one wrong move...”

“ You destroy me, I get it” Lillian rolled her eyes. The threats were getting old. She placed her hands behind her back and alex softened, “ Place your hands in front of you please.”

Lillian complied with a nod, her eyes already watering at the thought of being able to see her not so little baby girl again. Once her hands and feet were cuffed, Alex and Maggie each took an arm and guided

her down the hall behind Emma, her chains rattling loudly down the corridor. Regina gave her a nod just before she left the room and Lillian was overwhelmed with gratitude for how Regina had treated her. She recognized a bit of herself in the brunette, and clearly, Regina felt the same. Raven stood beside her brunette mother watching them leave and Lillian managed a smile when Regina casually wrapped an arm around her adult daughter. Her heart clenched, Lena hadn't allowed Lillian to touch her at all, let alone lean into a hug in years. Her heart filled with a yearning she hadn't allowed herself to feel for years.

Emma motioned for them to wait once they reached the infirmary and she stopped. Emma stepped into the small medical bay and spoke briefly with Dana, whose color had returned. She looked exhausted and was clearly still ill, but her health was slowly being restored. William turned from his task across the room and met Lillian's gaze with a nod. His eyes were sharp, and she heard his voice fill her mind, though he was a room away through soundproof glass and his lips were not moving, "make the most of your second chance Lillian Luthor" she nodded that she understood.

Emma headed into the hospital room where Monica was staying. A moment later, a very tired Monica emerged, standing on her own two feet, leaning heavily on Emma and her IV stand. Lillian expected to see anger, fear, something in the brunette's eyes, but Monica gave her a weak smile as she approached. She frowned when she saw the cuffs, "Is that really necessary?" she asked softly. Alex started to explain but Lillian nodded, "It makes everyone more comfortable."

Monica shook her head, "Cuff her to me, if you are so worried. This..." she waves to the chains limiting Lillian's movement, "is overkill. If she truly wanted to escape, I have no doubt she would have zero problem doing exactly that, chained or not. Lena and Kara are finally asleep, there's no need to wake them up with unnecessary noise because you want to be overly cautious."

Alex glanced at Maggie who nodded. Shrugging, Alex tugged Lillian to face her and began undoing the cuffs once more. Maggie handed Monica a pair of handcuffs and Monica gently took Lillian's wrist and cuffed it before doing the same to her own. "don't try anything" she warned Lillian before telling Monica, "we will be just outside if you

need us.

Monica inclined her head towards the hospital room, “ Let’s go see our daughter”

Lillian’s eyes watered and she glanced at Emma who gave her a tremulous smile, clearly lost in a memory of her own. Given what little Regina had told her, it was probably of a moment very similar to this one. Lillian looked at Monica, “ Why? Why share her with me?”

Monica arched a brow, “ You cared for her for most of her life. You kept her safe. You did everything I wanted to do for her but couldn’t. She is as much your daughter as she is mine. And you are still protecting her.” Monica glanced at Emma before meeting Lillian’s gaze once more, “ Emma told me what you did for us. Thank you.”

This meeting was so drastically different from the time they met several days before that it left Lillian’s head spinning. She nodded numbly, rendered speechless by the kindness she was being shown. Monica allowed Lillian to bear some of her weight as she guided them into the room, Emma carrying a second chair in so they could sit side by side. Lillian gasped when she saw her daughter wrapped around Kara, both sound asleep. Her heart momentarily clenched when she realized that Lena loved Kara deeply. It hurt her heart for a brief moment, knowing her attempts to keep Lena from the danger surrounding aliens had driven her directly into the arms of one, but the pain faded quickly as she watched the way Kara allowed Lena to wrap herself around the kryptonian. If she had to choose an alien, she couldn’t have chosen one with a kinder heart than Kara Zor- El. She was nothing like her insufferably self righteous cousin. Lillian sighed and sat in the chair, Monica managing a wry grin when Lillian glanced at her. Monica couldn’t seem happier or more relieved, seeing Lena safe and sound.

Glancing at the two sleeping girls, Lillian studied Lena’s face. She had never seen her daughter this vulnerable before. There had always been a guardedness to Lena’s approach to her, a mask the girl always wore. Lena looked years younger like this, soft and trusting as she slumbered. Her fingers itched to reach out and brush Lena’s hair from her face, but she refrained, wondering if Lena would ever welcome

her touch. Monica watched her carefully as she studied her adopted daughter. Sitting there, cuffed to Lena's birth mother was incredibly humbling for Lillian. They both had tried, in their own ways to protect her, and both had failed. Monica was offering her far more grace than she deserved, allowing her this gift.

Lillian sat back in the chair with a sigh. She knew she had a long road ahead of her and redemption wouldn't come easily for her. But she resolved in that moment, that she would do whatever it took, and she would work to never take her daughter's vulnerability for granted again.

Monica watched Lillian study her baby girl. She saw the frown when she realized just who Lena had wrapped herself around but noticed that the initial surprise and hurt faded to resignation and acceptance quickly. It was odd, seeing beneath Lillian Luthor's mask of superiority. She had never allowed her emotions to show, let alone rule her, as she was now. It was disconcerting and confusing to say the least, but fit well with what Lena, Kara and even Emma had stated they observed.

This woman was broken. She had reached the end of her defenses and she allowed them to break, apparently finally realizing, her war against aliens had cost her more than she was willing to sacrifice.

Monica knew the moment she saw Lillian outside the room that this was not the powerful leader of Cadmus. This was the mother broken by her daughter's battle with cancer. That was a feeling Monica knew well. She had resigned herself to the fact that she would die, while simultaneously acknowledging the two people she loved most in the world would lose their battles as well. Until, that is, Lillian stepped in. Monica didn't know how to better express her gratitude for Lillian's intervention, then allow her to see the daughter they both shared. Monica had no idea how this would work out in the long run, but she was determined to try, for Lena's sake.

They sat in silence for a few hours, watching the steady rise and fall of Lena's chest, and the color slowly returning to her gaunt features.

At some point, Dana snuck in, checked everyone's vials and prepared to leave before Monica had the presence of mind to stop her and ask gently, " Stay". Lillian seemed curious about her relationship with Dana but turned away to afford them a moment of privacy.

Dana nodded and slipped out of the room to find a third chair. Returning, she placed the chair beside Monica and sank into it with a tired sigh. Monica hesitated for a moment before sliding her fingers over the back of Dana's hand. It startled the redhead and Monica nearly pulled away but Dana took her hand and offered her a quiet smile.

" So what's the verdict doc?" Monica teased lightly.

Dana nodded, " We are all recovering." Dana glanced at Lillian, " from what I hear, you had a hand in that, so... thank you"

Lillian flushed, unable to meet her gaze, " I'm just glad it worked. There was always the slim chance CSM had the foresight to falsify the codes in case we hacked in."

Dana shook her head, " From the bloodwork we've taken this morning, and the scan I ran on Monica a little while ago, the cancer is dying out and healthy cells are reasserting themselves. Given the fact that everyone diagnosed seems to be doing much better, I'd say those results will be confirmed once everyone feels well enough for another round of tests."

Monica caught movement from the corner of her eye and noticed Lena watching them all, her expression betraying her confusion, "Mom?"

Both Lillian and Monica's heads swiveled towards their daughter where she eyed them in confusion, " What's going on?"

She was eyeing their cuffed hands with trepidation. Monica spoke first, seeing fresh grief in Lillian's eyes, " Your mom wanted to see you, and... the DEO was being overly cautious, so I offered to take responsibility for her"

Lena glanced at lillian, who confirmed Monica's statement with a

nod, inclining her head, “ If you don’t want me here, I can go....”

Lena shook her head firmly, “No, it’s fine, you can stay... I just.. Didn’t think you would want to see me after what I said to you.”

Lillian looked immensely relieved, “ Of course I want to see you Lena. I meant what I said, no matter what happens between us, you will always be my daughter. But I want you to know, If you want me to leave, say the word. I won’t disrespect your wishes again. I really do want to fix things. So if you are uncomfortable with my presence here, I can return to my cell and wait for you to come to me”

Kara stirred, glancing around the room in equal confusion. She had sensed Lena’s tension. Kara frowned when she realized why. She started to shift to shield Lena but Lena was faster, gently shaking her head as she left the bed and headed towards her adopted mother, “ You saved our lives. I know how hard it must have been for you to give Cadmus up.”

Lillian shook her head, tears forming in her eyes, “ It wasn’t hard, not really. I should have done it sooner. Had I done it sooner, you never would have...”

Lena chuckled, “ Mother, stop. You know as well as I do that CSM is relentless. He nearly killed me before and that was with me being protected. You are not at fault for my cancer. The rest of it... Well, we can work on the rest of it. But for now... I want you here.”

Lillian nodded gratefully, “ If you are sure...”

“ I am” Lena stated firmly. “ This doesn’t mean I trust you. But.. I’m willing to give fixing this a try, if you are serious, I am too.”

“ I am serious, nothing is worth losing you. I am so sorry I didn’t figure that out before.”

Lena nodded and offered her mother her hand. Lillian took and squeezed gratefully as Lena gave her a weak smile. She turned to the others, “ So are we throwing a party in here or what?”

Dana grinned, “ Perhaps we should, evidence suggests everyone is on the road to recovery, and once William recovers the necessary

artefacts, that recovery should be permanent.”

Lena sighed in relief, “ that’s excellent news. I feel considerably better already, so I’m assuming the attempt to get the chips working succeeded?”

Lillian nodded, “ It did. And CSM is locked out. The code keeps him from being able to access the chips again. So they will remain active until they can be safely removed.”

Lena arched a brow, impressed with Lillian’s thorough approach.

Monica watched them for a moment and sighed before calling Alex. The agent barrelled into the room weapon drawn and Lena laughed, “ Put it away Danvers”

Alex narrowed her eyes at Lillian before holstering her weapon. Monica caught the hint of disappointment that she couldn’t fire at Lillian. She sighed, “ could you please take these off, its really unnecessary.”

Alex hesitated but Kara, surprisingly enough pointed out, “ even if she were to try something Alex, she wouldn’t get past me. Come on, we can be civil right?”

Lillian shot a surprised look at Kara and the blonde shrugged, “ we both know I could put you down before you even knew what was happening.”

Lillian huffed, “ I get that you despise me, but the threats are really getting old. You couldn’t keep me here if I didn’t want to be. And clearly, I do, so could we lay off the death threats. It’s insulting”

Lena chuckled, “ there’s the lillian I know.” Lillian frowned, and began to apologize but Lena waved her off, “she’s right. It’s just stupid to keep her chained up like an animal. Just uncuff her. We are going to need her help fighting CSM, and keeping her cuffed and threatening her constantly doesn’t exactly inspire her to trust us. She saved not only my life, but Dana and my mom’s as well. You can monitor her without being an ass about it.”

Alex frowned, “ she hates my sister, has tried to take her out several

times”

“ Oh please. Now you really are insulting my intelligence. If I had really wished Kara Zor- El harm, she would be dead. I’ve used her for my own ends, absolutely. I’ve temporarily gotten her out of the way, but I’ve never made a serious attempt on her life, and I won’t.”

Alex clearly didn’t believe her and Lillian rolled her eyes, “ While I am not overly fond of Kryptonians, my daughter clearly is, so you have my word, as long as I am alive, Kara Zor- El will come to no harm by my hand, nor by anyone under my command. Whatever is necessary to keep her safe, I will gladly do. And perhaps one day, I will learn exactly what it is my daughter sees in an alien that she does not see in her own kind”

Both Lena and Kara were blushing furiously while avoiding eye contact with anyone. Monica couldn’t help but laugh at Lillian’s annoyance, Alex’s bashful expression and the horrified looks on the faces of Lena and Kara. Dana for her part chuckled too, “ Good enough for me.” she stated with a smirk. Alex nodded and released Lillian from her cuffs with a gruff apology.

Fingers lightly rapped against the door frame and the blonde head of Emma swan poked in, “ hey, wanted to see how the fam was doing.”

Monica gave her a warm smile, “ WE haven’t killed each other yet Emma.”

Emma laughed, “ It’s a start, and a good one at that. Hey look. We think we know where the Syndicate is...” she raised a hand silencing Kara before she got too far ahead, “ And no, we are not leaving today. We need time to prepare. This fight, more than any other we’ve faced thus far, we cannot afford to run headfirst into without a solid strategy for getting out alive. They are in the heart of Manhattan, in a warehouse. From what we could see using Cadmus’s surveillance capabilities, it’s heavily fortified and reinforced. Thanks, by the way for the access. It’s proving useful. We’ve gotten in contact with several of your strike teams and they are a bit hesitant to come in. perhaps you could assuage their fears?”

Lillian nodded earnestly, “ Absolutely. Lead the way”

Emma laughed, “ Eager aren’t we? Get some rest tonight. We already told them to take the night off and we would be in touch first thing tomorrow morning. I figured after the rather difficult week we’ve had, everyone could use some downtime to enjoy the fact that everyone is awake and coherent. Besides, Alex managed to challenge Lexa to a grounder’s duel, and I’m pretty sure everyone’s going to want to be there for that.”

Kara laughed, glancing at her sister who looked rather proud of herself, “ You challenged Lexa?”

Alex smirked, “ Not exactly...she implied I was too scrawny to have any real strength and I told her I could take on three of her finest warriors at once and not break a sweat”

Lena laughed, “ You’re right Auntie Em, Alex getting her ass handed to her by Lexa is definitely something I want to see”

“Well, their fight is a few hours after dinner, so if you can manage to stay awake for that long sleeping beauty, that’s exactly what you will see. I taught her how to fight myself”

Alex huffed, “ Hey, you trained me too” She protested, “ That ought to count for something...”

Emma smirked, “ Yeah, I showed you a few things while I was here, but I was Lexa’s personal trainer for years leading up to her conclave. And let me assure you Danvers, you have skill, but you are no match for my daughter, or any of my children for that matter.”

Alex groaned, “ Is it too late to back out?”

“Yes” Everyone agreed immediately. Emma laughed, “ Unless of course you want to prove her right in more ways than one. Lexa respects you, in spite of her teasing. You back down now though, you lose your street cred for good where she and Clarke are concerned”

“ And me” Kara agreed. “ You can take her sis. You just have to find a way to even the playing field like you did with me”

Alex nodded, her expressions serious, “ At least someone believes in me” she muttered. Everyone laughed once more. Monica glanced at

Lillian, who had zoned out of the conversation. Monica nudged her, “You are going to watch, right?”

Lillian looked puzzled, “ I wasn’t aware I was invited”

Emma shrugged, “Everyone is going to be there. We can keep an eye on you, there’s really no reason to keep you in a cell. You clearly want to be here, so yeah, join us.”

Lillian glanced at Monica and Lena who both nodded.

Emma grinned, “Good, it’s settled, now, who’s hungry?”

Notes for the Chapter:

I distinctly recall someone requesting a show down between Alex and Lexa. and I am confirming that the next chapter will be exactly that. a few others may duel as well, we shall see. The next chapter will be mostly fluff and family fun. This crew BADLY needs it.

Comments welcome and appreciated. the last chapter was lacking in comments and it made me sad :-(

21. First Rule of Fight Club

Notes for the Chapter:

If you haven't already, read the one shots under next work in order to understand what is going on in this chapter. Particularly chapter three of the one shots because it ties directly into the events of this chapter. I filled several requests in this chapter, which is part of the reason it took so darn long. still, hopefully this chapter is okay

- Lexa and Raven have a serious talk about forgiveness
- Lexa and Alex spar
- Emma spars too (and she's scary good at it ;-)

Dinner had been a much lighter affair with everyone beginning to recover from the illnesses, thanks to Lillian's assistance. Despite everyone's distrust of her, and her rather abrasive nature in general, Raven liked Lillian. She was fiercely protective of her adopted daughter and downright brilliant. Raven had picked her brain throughout dinner about a number of topics relating to the technology they had discovered in CSM's files. While Lillian had clearly felt out of place in such a large friendly affair, she eventually relaxed enough to join in the conversations around her, even if much of the banter went over her head entirely. After dinner, they had remained around the table talking for another two hours, largely ignoring the reason they were so far from home.

Raven and Winn had eventually abandoned CSM's files and instead discussed armor designs for superheroes. Raven was mentally modifying ideas to help create suitable armor for Storybrooke's heroes. She was tired of nearly losing one or both mothers to the latest disaster. Lexa of course had teased her relentlessly about her budding friendship with Winn, interpreting it to be something Raven wasn't ready to label. Raven eventually had rather harshly told her to shove off. Lexa frowned and turned away, a hint of hurt in her features and Raven sighed. Her mothers' watched the interaction closely and Raven caught the disappointment in Regina's gaze. Raven

knew she was being stubborn and knew that rationally, the way she was treating her twin was unfair. Their history wasn't pretty, and she knew Lexa's apology was sincere. Still, the hurt and betrayal of finding out her own birth sister whom she had been so close to when they were little had been the very person who tortured her and sentenced her boyfriend to die stung. It added fresh salt to a wound that had just begun to heal.

She sighed and grabbed Lexa's arm, "Hey... I'm sorry for being an ass"

Lexa glanced at her and nodded, "I understand. You haven't forgiven me yet."

Raven sighed, "That's the thing, I have... kind of... I just... I don't know. I know you didn't do it knowing full well who I was, but it doesn't..."

"It doesn't undo the hurt. That's perfectly understandable. I know you are wondering, with the connection we have as twins, how neither of us recognized each other, why that connection didn't stop us from hurting each other"

The grief in Lexa's voice was apparent as she admitted softly, "I ask myself the same thing every day *strisis*."

Raven nodded, "I never told you I was sorry"

"For what? What we did, we did for our people, to protect those we cared about. I didn't remember you anymore than you remembered me, so understandably, neither of us was on the other's list of people to protect at all costs. Don't apologize to me for protecting your people."

Raven sighed, "No, I'm sorry it's taking me so long to get over it. I know it's hurting you, and I'm trying"

Lexa shook her head, "Don't apologize for needing time to heal either. It takes you as long as it takes. Forgiveness takes time. Just know, I truly am sorry, and when you are ready, I want the friendship we had when we were little back."

Raven nodded and surprised her stoic sister with a fierce hug, “ I’ll try harder. It helps, knowing you want to fix it. Thanks for being so understanding”

Lexa nodded, “ I know it would take me a bit to get over that too. While you are working on forgiving me, try to forgive Clarke too. She misses you”

Raven nodded, “ Yeah, I’ve been a bit standoffish. I just... I see you two, both so happy, and you both....”

“ Are responsible for Finn’s death?”

She nodded, “ I understand why, I really do. He killed an entire village. I get that now. It’s just hard to deal with the fact that he’s gone. I have a hard time dealing with the fact that the Finn I knew massacred a whole village. That’s not the kid I knew”

Lexa nodded, “ Unfortunately, that’s the only Finn I knew. I am sorry for your loss, but I won’t apologize for doing what I had to for peace. My people would have destroyed you all, had I not acted swiftly”

Raven nodded, “ I know. I ... am beginning to understand the choices you had to make. I admire you, you know. I don’t think I could have done the same in your shoes... force someone you love to kill someone they love to save both groups... “ Raven shook her head, “ I couldn’t do it, that’s why I stick with the tech.”

Lexa nodded, satisfied for now and Raven caught Regina giving her a warm smile as she turned away. Emma tossed her a thumbs up and mouthed, “ *Proud of you kiddo*”

Raven flushed as they headed to the training facility. Raven’s brows arched as she entered the training room, staring at the wide assortment of high tech tools. She subtly pulled out her phone and texted her brother. *You free? You gotta see this.*

A moment later, he responded, *Yeah, I’ve got a few minutes, what’s up?*

Instead of answering, she tapped on the wechat app and video called him.

Regina caught the mischievous look on her daughter's face and lifted an eyebrow, "What are you up to Raven?"

" Nothing nefarious mom, chill. I thought Henry would get a kick out of watching Lexa kick Alex's butt is all"

Regina frowned at Raven's choice of words but Raven grinned at her and returned her attention to her phone. Henry was smirking at her through the screen, Octavia and Aden hovering over his shoulder. Raven waited for her mother to step away before whispering, " You gotta see this. We gotta upgrade the arena"

Someone entered the Mayor's office and interrupted them. Henry glanced at someone off screen and nodded as he rolled his eyes, " Send Mulan, and Gramps, go with her. You know how they get..." he paused and laughed, "Oh, don't act like you don't cut them entirely too much slack Grams. You know as well as I do that you let those dwarves get away with murder."

Raven chuckled as Henry barked more orders, " Okay, everyone out. Aden and Octavia stay"

He returned his attention to the screen, " Okay, show me"

"Bossy much?" Raven admonished lightly.

Henry shrugged, " The town is... well, we are managing, but yeah, I can understand why mom and ma come home cranky as all get out now. Fairytale characters, I swear..."

Raven laughed, noting how much Henry acted like a combination of both moms in that moment. She turned her phone camera to show the room and Henry gave a low whistle, " You weren't kidding. That place is state of the art... where are you again?"

J'onn shook his head firmly, glaring at them, " That's classified information"

Raven arched a brow at him and returned her attention to her brother who was messing with the computer in the mayor's office, "Nevermind, I got it. Looks like... you guys are at 163 Rainer Avenue, National City.... on the.... 23rd floor, just down the hall

from the elevators.”

J’onn’s head whipped around so fast, “ How the hell do you know that?”

Raven smirked, “ I mighta... helped him download my custom software package onto mom’s laptop.”

Regina frowned as she approached but Raven waved off her concern, “ Relax, he wanted to be able to find us in case something happened. It’s literally a slightly modified phone finder application. It’s harmless, I swear. ”

Regina was still giving her the stink eye, and where it clearly was making Henry nervous, it had little effect on Raven. It never really had . Raven had always had her mother's' wrapped around her pinky finger.

Henry chuckled nervously, “ I don’t use it all the time mom, promise”

Regina shook her head, “ You all are up to something, I will find out what it is.”

All the Swan- Mills children adopted their best innocent smiles and even Emma started narrowing her eyes, “ Yeah... something’s definitely up. My lie detector is pinging like crazy.”

Cat Grant swept into the room with Zelena and Abby, “ Okay, let’s do this.”

The Swan Mills kids collectively breathed a sigh of relief. The late arrivals saved them from what was sure to become an interrogation.

J’onn nodded, “ Who’s fighting?”

Alex and Lexa stepped forward, “ We are”

He glanced around the room, “ Anyone else want to do a round? We could all use the extra training session.”

Raven glanced at her leg and frowned. They had done their best to heal it the night they all made it to Storybrooke, and largely it was

healed. Mainly she dealt with a bit of weakness in the limb since she had overcompensated to favor it for so long.

William noticed her hesitance and smiled, “ Once I have the artefacts, I can take care of your leg too Raven”

Lexa laughed, “Oh god, Raven fully healed? She manages to fight pretty well the way it is”

Raven froze and panic crossed several faces while Emma and Regina glanced around the room and at each other before Regina approached Zelena, “ Something you want to tell me sis?”

“ Nope. Not a thing Reggie” Zelena squeaked.

Lexa was frowning, realizing her slip and Raven glared at her, mouthing “ Way to go”

Regina arched her brow at Abby, who was fidgeting nervously while Emma chuckled, “ I’m guessing that magic lesson the night we got back from Polis didn’t go according to plan?”

Abby avoided Regina’s gaze and continued to shuffle from foot to foot and Zelena huffed, “ Hey, it wasn’t for my lack of trying. Your children are little terrors. Terrors I tell you!”

“ Way to rat us out auntie Z” Clarke stated with a wry laugh before admitting, “ Things... may have gotten a bit out of hand that night. But no one got hurt. That’s the important thing, right?” She flashed a winning smile and Raven burst out laughing. They were grown adults, but still very much kids. Regina and Emma’s approval meant a lot to them, but at the same time, they knew how to take care of themselves. There wasn’t much Regina and Emma could actually do to correct their behavior, and while they had admitted things got crazy, her mothers didn’t know about the arena, yet.

“ Arena? What arena?” Regina’s voice was shrill, more afraid than angry.

Raven covered her mouth, realizing the verbal diarrhea confessional had spread to her as well

“ Way to go Raven” Henry scolded from her phone.

“ Ravenna Marie Swan- Mills you will tell me what arena right now or so help me...”

Emma chuckled nervously, “ Okay ‘Gina, relax. I’m sure that this isn’t as bad as it sounds. Right?”

She was eyeing Raven who nodded sincerely, “ It’s not what you are thinking mom. It’s more a dedicated space to practice our magic than anything else. Henry even installed some safety features to make it as safe as possible.”

Regina's eyes were still narrowed at her kids before she sighed, “ I will be checking out this arena as soon as we get home, and Henry Daniel Swan Mills, if you think you are getting away with this because I am not there right now, you’ve got another thing coming”

Henry nodded sincerely as Raven angled the phone so Regina could see him. Someone buzzed into the Mayors office and Henry sighed, “ Duty calls, but record it for me, k? I want to watch it later” Raven agreed and Henry hung up with a sigh, “ I always miss the fun shit”

Regina glared at the phone but Raven shrugged, “ you can yell at him for language later.”

Lena took Raven’s phone from her, promising to record it and send it to Henry since she tended to shake more than most people.

Regina shook her head and leaned into Emma who soothed her with a hug and rubbed circles into her back. Emma arched her brow at Raven who shrugged apologetically.

J’onn took advantage of the momentary lapse in conversation and motioned Lexa and Alex into the center of the room after handing them both blunted daggers. Alex easily leapt onto the platform as everyone grew serious. Raven watched as Lexa followed her onto the platform, her expression already morphing into an emotionless mask, her eyes growing colder and calculating. The difference in her twin would have been startling, had Raven never seen this before. She smiled as Lexa adopted a familiar stance, once Raven knew from

their childhood fights with wooden swords.

The two women circled each other. Alex watched Lexa move intently, a smirk tugging at her lips as she moved. Alex was obviously quick on her feet but Raven grinned, Lexa was faster, Alex didn't know that yet. Raven had the benefit of having taken on her twin before. She could already see several mistakes Alex was making.

Alex tired of the circling and moved in first, swiftly swinging at Lexa. Lexa easily leaned backwards, falling back on one hand to lash out at Alex with her foot. She managed a glancing blow that knocked Alex off balance before pushing back to her feet swiftly. Alex didn't have time to react before Lexa was closing in, whirling, arms swinging with a speed Alex couldn't match. She barely got her arms up in time to block one blow before Lexa was moving to land the next. She steadily forced Alex to the back of the ring. Alex tried to lash out at Lexa with her foot, but Lexa swiftly crossed her daggers, catching Alex's foot and twisting. Alex lost her balance and fell, Lexa following swiftly, already swinging again. Alex managed to roll out of the way before getting back to her feet, frowning. They circled once more, Alex watching her opponent more intently than before. She was out of breath and glaring at Lexa.

To Raven, the difference was obvious. Lexa was the picture of calm. Her emotionless mask made it difficult to predict her next move. Alex on the other hand was an open book. Her emotions were on full display, and driving her choices, making predicting her movements easy.

J'onn frowned, " Alex, you can do better than that. Clear your head, don't react, anticipate." Alex glanced at him and nodded, taking a deep breath and centering herself. She returned her gaze to Lexa, who arched her brow. Alex nodded firmly. This time, Lexa struck first, moving swiftly around Alex, trying to land a blow from behind. Alex smirked as she maneuvered out of the way, " Nice try. I watched the replay of your match with Clarke"

Lexa did not respond. She was too busy dodging an attack from Alex. Alex swung again, leaving little room for Lexa to react. Luckily, a little time is all she needed. Alex's foot connected with Lexa's side, knocking her to the ground. Lexa rolled into a crouch, her foot

lashing out and knocking Alex's feet from under her easily. Alex groaned as she went down, barely managing to roll out of the way as a dagger came down beside her head. She didn't see the other one coming down ahead of her. She froze when Lexa was suddenly sitting on her, a blade pressed to her throat. Alex froze for a moment, and Raven thought she had conceded.

She thought wrong. Alex swung her fist, forcing Lexa to retreat by rolling off of her. Lexa grinned at Alex, " Well done Danvers" Alex nodded, accepting the compliment before moving towards Lexa again. She swung once, Lexa ducked left, then right. Pretty soon they fell into a rhythm, swing, duck, deflect, swing, dodge, block. Alex seemed to be anticipating Lexa's moves but Raven smirked as she glanced at Emma, who was grinning proudly. Glancing back, she watched thier dance before grinning herself. Lexa had succeeded in lulling Alex into a false sense of security.

Alex thought she was keeping up, but gradually, Lexa was leading her to block in such a way that she left room for a counter attack. A moment later, Kara caught on to Lexa's ploy and tried to warn her sister, but it was too late. Alex swung high to block where she thought Lexa would strike, leaving her chest exposed. Lexa took full advantage of the opening she had created and the pommel of one dagger was driven into Alex's core, forcing her to double over and stagger backwards. She had less than half a second to straighten before Lexa swung the other and it landed at her neck in what would have been a deathblow had this been a real duel. When she realized Lexa had followed her and now had a dagger at her throat she froze, frustration and awe evident on her face.

Lexa chuckled as she stepped away, " Never take your advantage for granted Danvers, other than that, you did well"

Alex sighed and offered her hand, " Thanks. I would be honored if you would work with me. I feel I could learn a great deal from you. You move so fast"

Lexa nodded, " You are welcome to join Clarke and I during our next sparring session."

They jumped off the platform and Emma swung herself up easily, "

Come on J'onn. Show me what you've got"

J'onn's eyes narrowed, " you seem entirely too eager Swan."

She laughed, " I'm not the Dark One anymore, think you can take me on now?"

" No magic. I know what you are capable of with magic. Lets see what you can do without it"

She smirked, " I don't need it."

He glanced at Regina who arched her brow. Raven eased closer to her brunette mother when she caught the smirk tugging at her lips. " this should be interesting" Regina stated too softly for anyone other than raven to hear. Raven nodded her agreement.

J'onn shook his head as he climbed onto the platform. Emma refused the blades Lexa offered and J'onn followed her lead.

Just as they began circling, Monica and Dana finally made it to the room, looking exhausted, but better than before. Lena, William and Lillian entered after. Monica laughed when she realized who J'onn was about to spar. " Didn't you learn your lesson last time J'onn?"

Regina glanced at Monica, " She beat him that badly?"

Monica chuckled, " She did." Emma was grinning cockily, " He always underestimates me"

Raven smirked at her blonde birthmother, who currently had her back to J'onn. Seeing an opportunity he believed too good to pass up, J'onn launched himself at the blonde, believing her to be defenseless and unaware.

He moved rapidly, not seeing that Emma had anticipated his move. She bent her subtly and widened her stance just before he slammed into her. He managed to get an arm around her, pulling her into a choke hold.

He didn't realize his mistake until Emma grabbed his arm firmly, dropped her weight and center of gravity before easily using his

height and weight against him and launching him over her back through the air. He hit the wall across the room with a groan. Kara whooped, "You have got to show me how to do that!"

Emma grinned, " Let's make this more interesting, shall we? Kara... J'onnn could use some backup"

" I do not!" he growled but Kara lept at the opportunity to join in.

A moment later, J'onnn was back on the platform, Kara at his side. Emma smirked as they both circled her. Emma was light and quick on her feet, and Raven easily identified many of the same traits in Emma's style that Lexa used. It was clear that Emma had indeed been Lexa's instructor. Emma dodged and weaved gracefully, appearing to be dancing, while Kara and J'onnn relied upon their brute strength, their blows failing to find their target. Emma was too fast. She was a blur, dodging blows easily. Raven glanced at Lexa and they both joined the others on the platform, Alex leaping back up as well. Emma was now facing five opponents. Her smirk only widened. Monica and Regina were shaking their heads and laughing.

Emma grinned, " That's better"

She straightened, and adopted a fighting stance, her form impeccable. Her mask slid into place as Lexa and Raven matched her. J'onnn glanced at the women around him and nodded, " You're going down Swan"

Emma arched a brow but said nothing. They advanced as one, but Emma was far faster. J'onnn was soon flipping through the air again, slamming into the wall. Emma planted her feet as both Danvers came at her, her hands out, letting them slam into her hands, the force of their own momentum throwing them from the platform. Emma stood, as Raven and Lexa circled her. Raven smirked, the others didn't rejoin them in the ring, favoring their sore muscles and bruised egos as the Swan Mills daughters faced her blonde mother. Raven moved around her mother, recalling her early years in the field, watching Emma spar with Henry.

"There are only a few things you need to remember in a fight. Hang back. Let your opponent make the first move. Let them waste their energy if they

are willing. Watch them carefully, find their weaknesses and exploit them. Each fighter has a preferred method. Once you know what that is, you know how to counter. Watch them closely, and you will learn to anticipate. Never turn your back, but if you do, never let your guard down. And never, ever underestimate your opponent. Always assume that they are stronger, faster and more intelligent than you. It's the only way you will survive in a real fight"

Regina hadn't particularly enjoyed Emma's determination to teach their children how to fight, but when Henry got into a fight with a pauna and survived with only a scratch after a handful of lessons from his mother, she reconsidered and begrudgingly obliged the blonde. Often, Emma had sparred with Henry and encouraged them to watch before trying it themselves. Fighting Lexa had always been challenging, they knew each other so well, that they were evenly matched. Emma had closely monitored the little three year olds, and stepped in if one went too far.

Lexa and Raven worked best together, and she knew she would last longer in this fight if she coordinated with her sister. She knew Lexa would be Emma's sole opponent within a minute, but she wanted to land at least one blow before she landed on her ass. Glancing at her sister, Lexa gave her the slightest nod.

Raven began circling her blonde mother in the opposite direction as her twin and Emma grinned in approval.

Raven waited until Lexa was in her mother's blindspot before swinging. She ducked when Emma threw a counter punch and lashed out with her foot, trying to trip Raven. Raven glared playfully, "Trying to use my disability against me ma? That's just rude"

Lexa signalled from behind and Raven moved in, faster this time, not trying to land a blow, but to push her mother into Lexa's attack. It looked like it worked when Emma stepped back, but then she did something neither expected, she dropped to the ground, sliding under Lexa's swinging fist easily before lashing her leg out and knocking Lexa off her feet. Lexa recovered quickly and was back on her feet and advancing on her mother. Both she and Raven swung swiftly, and Emma managed to duck out of Lexa's reach only for Raven to land a blow to her shoulder. Raven managed to kick Emma in the gut but couldn't retract her foot fast enough to avoid her mother twisting her

leg and sending her to the ground with a grunt. Having had enough, Raven backed away and watched her twin and mother circle each other. She grinned in spite of the ache in her leg.

It was now teacher and student, mom and daughter. They danced for several minutes, circling each other, watching, anticipating the other's every move. It reminded Raven of the chess games back on the arc, and knew her twin and her mother were mapping out several moves ahead, learning, anticipating. Raven knew that her sister was more patient and more focused. All she needed was a narrow window, a momentary distraction and Emma would go down. Lexa circled her mother again, a lioness circling her prey.

Emma watched and waited until Lillian spoke, " Would you two quit dancing around each other and get it over with already?"

The moment she spoke, Lexa moved faster than Raven had ever seen her manage before. It was impressive how quickly she closed in on her mother. Unfortunately for her, Emma expected it and recovered from the distraction too quickly for Lexa's attack to land a single blow. Instead Emma twisted out of her reach, twirled around, grabbed her daughter and knocked her to the ground, Emma's hand firmly on her chest, holding her there as she growled, "Yu gonplei ste odon." Everyone gasped at both the speed and seeming ferocity of the movement as well as her dark tone but Lexa laughed.

Lexa shook her head, stubbornness evident even as she countered with a smile, "Oso gonplei nou ste odon nowe" Raven grinned, from her vantage point, she had seen Emma's free hand snap behind Lexa's head to prevent a concussion just before she hit the ground. Regina could not have seen that from her angle, and was raging at Emma. Raven jumped in, " It's okay mom, Ma kept her from hitting her head."

Lexa let her mother pull her to her feet with a grin, " I'm fine *nimon* , see?"

She twirled lightly, "Unharmd aside from my pride"

Regina was still frowning until Emma landed lightly on her feet off of the platform and sidled up to her, " you know I would never allow our

kids to actually get hurt, right?"

Regina hesitated, watching her daughters interact with their friends and nodded. Raven joined her mothers, " Ma, once my leg is healed..."

Emma nodded, anticipating her question, " We will resume your training pequena ave. you did very well today. I am proud of you"

Raven shrugged, " I remembered what you told us when we were little"

Emma nodded proudly, " I could tell. Both of you did very well. One thing though, Heda"

Lexa turned at the title and frowned, " Sha seda?" *yes teacher?*

Emma grinned at the familiar title, " Always assume your opponent has already predicted your next move. Especially one who knows you so well"

Lexa dipped her head, a light blush on her cheeks, " Sha"

Regina smiled at her daughters, " You both are unhurt?"

Emma sighed, pretending offense, " Seriously, do you not trust me with our children?"

Regina chuckled, " of course dear, but accidents happen"

Lexa shook her head, " Ma exercised restraint. Neither of us were in any danger of injury"

J'onn groaned, " If only we received the same deferential treatment."

Raven smirked, " Actually, you did. I've seen Ma pull those moves when she actually means business, you wouldn't be standing right now if she had truly meant you harm"

Kara approached the group, smiling. Sparring seemed to have improved her mood, even though she lost to Emma, without the handicap of kryptonite, " I think we should spar more. It's going to be

a few days before we have the intel to move on CSM and the Dark One. We should use that time to coordinate how we fight.”

“Kara...” J’onn and Alex warned. Kara flashed them an innocent smile, “ What?”

“Absolutely not, that room is far too dangerous.” Alex stated firmly.

“ For normal DEO agents, sure, but this group is not normal. Emma is stronger than me without the aid of kryptonite. I think all the magic users are. I didn’t know that until I fought them. Besides, we need to know how to best coordinate our efforts if we stand any chance of taking on a whole slew of super soldiers and dark ones.”

Lillian nodded, “ Supergirl has a point. Clearly, everyone here is highly skilled, but the only two I saw who can coordinate well together were the twins. Without being able to coordinate and communicate with each other in the middle of a fight, none of us stand a prayer's chance against CSM and his army.”

Kara seemed surprised by Lillian’s support but quickly recovered to use it to her advantage, “ It’s settled then, tomorrow, we train in the supers room”

Alex groaned, “ I hate that damned room” Kara grinned cheekily, that’s because you always get your ass handed to you.”

“ The supers room?” Dana asked frowning.

Kara nodded, “ It’s the room we superheroes use to train together for a mission. We train regularly so that when something comes up we are ready”

Emma nodded her agreement, “ That sounds like an excellent idea. Anyone who plans to come with us to New York should meet there first thing in the morning. For now, let’s enjoy the rest of our evening”

Everyone dispersed fairly quickly. Raven retreated to her room and showered. She changed into her pajamas and collapsed into her bed, exhaustion swiftly taking over.

Notes for the Chapter:

I apologize for the lengthy delay on this chapter, and its shorter length. The semester started off with a bang and its been very fast paced and busy. It may take longer for chapters now but I will finish this story, I promise.

What do you think so far? Its hard to judge whose reading and whose not on this story as opposed to Brave Enough, everyone's so quiet on this story. lol

22. SuperCorp

Notes for the Chapter:

So sorry for the long wait. This semester has been royally kicking my butt. still, I am going to finish this and I finally completed this chapter. It may be a bit shorter than some other chapters but It's all fluff for Supercorp and Agent Reyes/Scully. enjoy!

Kara followed Lena and her growing family back to their quarters. Lillian hesitated outside the room where Lena was staying, shifting from one foot to the other uncomfortably, “ I can just...” she gestured down the hall, “ head back to my cell for the night...” and everyone freezes, realizing they hadn’t thought of accommodations for Lillian. Monica shot Alex a meaningful look and Alex nodded immediately, “ no need Lillian, we have a spare room adjacent to mine you can use”

Lillian nodded gratefully and nodded to her daughter stiffly before heading down the hall after Alex.

Kara followed them down the hall with her eyes, until Lena cleared her throat, “ Kara, where are you going to sleep?”

Kara glanced at her and shrugged, “I don’t know. I was just going to head...”

Monica interrupted, “Nonsense. Stay here. I can room with Dana. we need to have a chat anyway”

Kara panicked, Monica was deliberately leaving her with Lena. Lena squeezed her hand, “ you don’t have to. You can go if you want”

Kara’s heart calmed, “ no. Monica’s right. There's no point in going home to have to come back in the morning. Besides, I want to be close in case Lillian tries anything, mulder too”

Lena nodded, “ for what it’s worth, I think Lillian means it.”

Kara started to protest but Lenma raised her hand tiredly, “ Look, i get it, believe me I do. She’s been awful. She's tried to come between

us a dozen times at least, but I know her. This is different. Mulder, he's another story, but my mother genuinely wants to help. Her showing up here, was her wanting to help. The only thing that's changed is the fact that she's willing to do it on our terms now. Her offer was genuine from the get go."

Kara nodded, " I know. Still... it's..."

" disconcerting. I know. But I don't want to talk about Lillian anymore. I really want to get some sleep, and I'd rather do that in your arms, but if you'd rather not... I'll understand"

Kara was floored by Lena's forwardness. She glanced at her best friend and saw the hint of fear in Lena's eyes, as if she'd surprised herself as well, and made herself unwittingly vulnerable to rejection. Kara made a decision quickly and nodded firmly, "I'd like that too. Feels like that nap earlier was the first time I'd really slept in weeks"

Lena managed a tired smile and gently tugged Kara into her room. " sorry if that was too much. I didn't mean for it to come out quite like that"

Kara chuckled, " It's fine. I'm used to your lack of filter when you are tired. You've stayed over often enough"

Lena nodded, an odd expression crossing her features briefly. She grabbed her pajamas and headed for the bathroom, pointing out another pair in her suitcase, " those are for you. You left them over at my place. I'll change in there." Kara nodded and Lena left to change.

Sighing, Kara changed out of her suit swiftly, and easily tugged on the pajamas. She folded her suit carefully as Lena knocked, " are you decent?"

Kara answered in the affirmative, and a much more casual, much more shy Lena emerged from the bathroom. They moved around each other nervously before Kara sighed and crawled under the covers, tossing them back and giving Lena a pointed look, " come on, we are both building this up in our heads far more than the occasion calls for"

Lena nodded gratefully and carefully slid in beside her best friend. Kara immediately pulled the blankets back over her and shifted so that she could easily tuck Lena into her side. Lena sighed in contentment, “ thanks for staying with me. I really didn't want to be alone tonight”

“ your mom would have...”

“ Yeah, but she needs to be with Dana. They have a lot to talk about with William being back.”

“ Is it true, what everyone is whispering about him? Is he... like me?”

Lena cocked an eyebrow at her, “ Alien you mean?”

Kara nodded and Lena sighed, “ The way he explained it, he’s both. He’s not really a hybrid so much as he is both fully human and fully alien.”

“So what kind of alien is he?”

Lena sighed, “ something he called the master race, the first race of aliens”

Kara couldn't help the reverent tone of awe, “oh Rao, he’s an ancient one?”

” I’m not sure what that is, but yeah, he's an extremely powerful alien human thing. And not only does he have Dana and Mulder’s DNA, but Emma and Regina’s as well.”

Kara shook her head and chuckled, “ well, I’m glad he’s on our side then.”

Lena nodded and snuggled closer until her head rested over Kara’s heart. Lena yawned, “ As much as I would love to keep telling you all about it darling, I’m very tired. Talk in the morning?”

Kara’s heart skipped a beat at the term of endearment she only ever heard from Lena when she was this sleepy.

“Sure.” she whispered, and brushed a featherlight kiss across the

brunette's forehead. Lena hummed softly and wrapped herself more securely around Kara, her leg sliding between Kara's. Kara bit back a groan and tried to relax. Having Lena this close was doing funny things to her stomach and her heart rate.

She told herself to breathe, recalling Lexa's words when Lexa had pulled her aside at breakfast that morning, *"be what she needs. Be her rock, be her friend, her confidant. She loves you. And I think deep down you know that"*

Kara had nodded, *"I'm afraid. I lose everyone I love. I can't afford to lose her too"*

"you won't. you don't give her enough credit. Lena can handle herself. You underestimate her feelings for you, and you underestimate her strength. It's okay to need her too Kara. Let yourself feel. Let yourself love"

"how? My love for her puts her in danger"

"and your love shields her from danger. She's a strong fiercely independent woman. She doesn't need your protection. She needs you. Like Clarke needed me. Like Emma and Regina need each other. Like your sister and Maggie. Both of you can stand on your own, but you are stronger together"

"a super and a luthor"

Lexa grinned, *"a deadly combination. Don't forget your own strength, and trust in hers. Now, stop moping and eat. You are of no use to her weak"*

Kara sighed. She was grateful for her new friends and the steady wisdom that flowed from them. She was grateful for their understanding and support. While they were human, they were all different, uniquely gifted like her, and like her, Clarke and Lexa and even Raven understood the pain of being ripped from the only world they had ever known and forced to adapt to a world they could barely comprehend. And yet, they had adjusted well, drawing on the strength and love around them for support. Lexa understood her, and Lena in a way her own sister did not. Lexa was extremely intuitive, easily picking up on what Kara was struggling with and extremely

dept at pinpointing the most effective way to break through Kara's spiraling thoughts.

She was grateful for Lexa's guidance, Clarke's steady confidence and calm, Raven's playful teasing. She felt like a member of the Swan-Mills Family, as well as Lena's new budding family. She had lost her own family but discovered something just as fulfilling. She knew more than ever that Lexa's words to her were true, “ *The interesting thing about loss is it provides you with a unique opportunity. you get to choose. You can wallow in it, and remain imprisoned by the pain of what you lost, or you can recognize that while you have loved and lost, you have also loved, and gained so much more love in return. These people, this network you have, you've made a home for yourself here Kara Zor El. these people, they are your family. And pulling away to protect them is not only misguided, it hurts you and them.* ”

Kara wrapped her arms more securely around the brunette sleeping in her arms and breathed a sigh of contentment. Lexa was right. These people were her home. And no one felt more like home than Lena Luthor. Kara loved her. More than she had ever loved anyone. Sure, she loved the danvers, she loved Winn and Cat Grant, and James. She loved her superhero friends, her alien friends and her human friends. But something happened to her the day she met Lena Luthor. It was like something inside her clicked, and suddenly, Kara Danvers had a plan. She had purpose and drive. Lena helped her discover something about herself she hadn't known, she had an identity outside of supergirl, and Kara Danvers had a place in this world. Lena didn't make her choose between one or the other. Lena treated both her identities the same, held them to the same standards, offered the same level of friendship and trust to the girl in the cape as the girl in the goofy clothes and false glasses. Lena saw the soul underneath, she always had. Kara knew it would only be a matter of time before Lena discovered they were one and the same, and she never really worried that Lena would turn on her. Her fear wasn't losing Lena's friendship, but losing Lena herself. More than anything, Kara worried Lena would be endangered by Kara's friendship. Having Alex kidnapped by an old high school acquaintance had only cemented that fear in Kara's heart, forcing to her swear that she would never reveal her true identity to Lena, because it would only endanger her further. She was already at risk

for publicly being friends with Supergirl. Knowing Supergirl's true identity would only compound the danger for her.

But now her secret was out, turns out it had been for a long while. And yet, Lena had patiently waited for Kara to confirm what she already knew to be true. Kara could still hear the pain in Lena's voice when she had assumed the reason Kara kept it from her was because of her last name

"as if your name would change how I feel about you, you silly human." Kara whispered, "I love you Lena Luthor Reyes. I think I have since that first day we met" she kissed Lena's forehead once more and settled down to sleep. Lena's breathing and heart rate never changed. She waited until she heard Kara's heart rate level out before whispering into the darkness of the room, "I love you too Kara Zor El."

Dana heard the soft knock at her door and knew instinctively who was on the other side. Taking a moment to calm her racing heart and fluttering nerves, she opened the door, "Hi"

Monica offered a weak smile, "Mind if I stay here tonight?"

Dana flushed and Monica rushed to explain, "I can sleep in the chair, I just.. Kara and Lena needed..."

"Don't be ridiculous. Come on in. you can sleep on the bed next to me. It won't be the first time we've shared a bed"

Monica's toned skin flushed and Dana smirked. Monica caught the look and arched a brow before brushing by Dana carefully into the room, "where's William?"

"He's with Kal El. He apparently doesn't need as much sleep as we do, and didn't want to keep me awake"

Monica hummed. Dana closed the door and turned to face Monica whose hands were wringing nervously. "Something on your mind Agent Reyes?"

Monica nodded and sighed, “ I feel like we need to talk. I’m sure you have questions for me regarding William and my time with CSM. now that everything is in the open, I want to tell you. I don’t want anymore secrets between us”

Dana debate whether or not she wanted to go there tonight. She sighed, “ okay, Just one question.”

“Anything” Monica stated emphatically, her earnest brown eyes studying Dana.

“ All this time. All these years, when you worked with John and I on all those cases, you were working for the DEO as well?”

Monica nodded, “ Yes, I’ve worked for the DEO for much longer than the FBI. they sent me to the FBI in the hopes that eventually I’d find my way to the X- Files. I petitioned several times to be reassigned to the X files, before you starting working with Mulder. But they were so focused on shutting it down, they didn’t want someone like me going near it”

“ because you are a believer?”

Monica smiled, “ because I’m an empath. I Told you along time ago, I have this ability to sense things, energy, emotions. I’ve solved numerous cases for the FBI that were otherwise unsolvable using those gifts. The numerology killer was one example of many. They knew of my particular skill set when I joined the FBI. Fox was spooky Mulder, I was Psychic Reyes”

Dana nodded. She remembered Monica’s unique skills and abilities. Initially she had read Monica Reyes all wrong and despised her but within hours of meeting her, Monica had changed her mind. A few months later, she and Monica had developed a close friendship, and Dana had come to trust Reyes’ instinct ‘s above anyone else’s.

She watched Monica stand nervously and sighed, “ Monica, relax. If you are expecting me to be angry that you kept William from me all these years, I’m not. I’m... grateful actually”

“Grateful? why? “ Monica seemed genuinely puzzled and Dana

arched a brow at her, “ because you kept your word. You kept him safe, at great personal cost to you. I never really appreciated what you did for me, for us when William was born. William reminded me of that today when he showed me you through his eyes. I took your presence and your friendship for granted. I still do. I’m the one who should be worried about losing our friendship, not the other way around”

“Don't be ridiculous Dana, you've been a good friend to me...”

” Really? Honestly Monica, I took advantage. You were going through so much yourself, you lost your daughter, you couldn't even tell me about her...”

Monica shook her head and grabbed Dana's shoulders firmly, “ Dana stop”

Dana's heart clenched, “ I wasn't the kind of friend you deserved, the kind of friend you could tell about your daughter... I used you...”

Monica shook her head earnestly, “Dana, I couldn't tell anyone. Please, understand that. I wanted to, and I certainly trusted you enough to. God, the day you gave William away, I wanted to tell you. I wanted to share that with you, help you realize you weren't alone. But if I did, it would endanger Lena, you and William. I pulled away because I had to. I had to protect you all at all costs. Even if it meant losing you as a friend”

Monica was crying and Dana tugged her towards the bed, forcing her to sit before reaching up and gently wiping away the brunette's tears, “ I'm sorry Monica. I can't begin to imagine what it's been like for you. But.. if you will let me, I'd like to be here for you now, be the friend you deserve”

Monica shook her head in disbelief, her tone emotionally raw, “ Friends?”

Dana gave her a wry smile, “ Unless... you'd be willing to try for something more than that...”

Monica stared at her, at a loss for words, her mouth opening and

closing in shock before shaking herself out of the stupor, “ You’d actually want that with me?”

Dana nodded, “ Are you kidding me? Monica, I’ve been in love with you for years. Why do you think I made you William’s godmother? Do you really think I would give that responsibility to someone I thought would only be in my life for a little while? You know me better than that. How many people did I entrust him, myself, Mulder to?”

Monica seemed to mull that over and nodded, “ I see. So you chose me to be his godmother because...”

“ Because I thought you were going to be in my life forever Mon. I thought that at the very least, If I couldn’t love you the way I wanted to, we could stay close, be partners at work, friends outside of it. I thought you were going to be in my life permanently. And I was trying, in my cowardly way to tell you how I felt about you”

Monica chuckled, “Em’s right, we’re idiots”

Dana laughed, “ I can't help but agree. I should have told you this years ago.” she wiped away the last of Monica’s tears, and tipped her chin up so that their eyes met, “ I love you Monica Reyes, and I have for a very long time. I am terrible at showing it, but I’m willing to give it a try, if you will let me”

Monica swallowed, “ Yes” she whispered hoarsely, before leaning in and pressing her lips ever so gently against Dana’s. Dana sighed in contentment as Monica's fingers slid through her hair, tugging her head down into the kiss. Dana hummed and kissed her back gently, melting into Monica’s arms, allowing Monica to guide her into her lap, a strong arm wrapped around her waist. Finally, when the need to breathe won out, they pulled back, breathless. Dana rested her forehead against Monica’s.

Monica pulled her into a hug and Dana went willingly, burying her nose in Monica’s hair. Monica sighed and relaxed into Dana, whispering, “ I love you too Dana. I knew I was going to love you the moment I saw you on that hill, even if you hated me at first.”

Dana chuckled, “ John was an idiot, introducing us like that”

“ Yes, he was, he’s always been stubborn. He still is”

Dana nodded, wanting to ask about John Doggett, but suddenly feeling the exhaustion of the day catch up with her. “ who would have thought? After all this time, I got you and my son back?”

Monica nodded, “ I’m sorry...”

“ Dont. Don't you dare apologize for protecting our son monica, or your daughter”

Monica choked back a half sob, “our son?”

Dana glanced at her, “ Yes. Our son. You helped care for him and protect him that first year, and you protected him when I could not. He sees you as his mother and that’s a role i would be an idiot to begrudge you now. You’ve earned it Monica. He’s as much your son as he is mine. I can only hope that I can do the same for you and Lena”

Monica pressed a kiss in her hair, “ I have no doubt you will.”

Dana sighed again, “ As much as I would love to stay right here, I admit I am exhausted. We should probably sleep”

Monica nodded and untangled herself from Dana. Monica headed into the bathroom to change while Dana crawled under the covers and turned off the light. Monica reentered the room a moment later and hesitated before heading for the chair in the corner of the room.

Dana huffed impatiently, “Get your ass over here Reyes. Where the hell do you think you are going?”

“ To sleep?” Monica seemed nervous and Dana climbed out of the covers, moving to stand before the nervously shifting brunette, “ Does the idea of sleeping beside me make you uncomfortable?”

Monica hesitated, her brown eyes glinting in the dim light before she answered softly, “ no... but I didn’t want to assume...”

“ I invited you to sleep in the bed beside me. One kiss doesn't change everything between us does it? Does it suddenly mean we can't behave like adults?”

Monica chuckled softly, “ No, I suppose it doesn't”

“ Good. Now get in bed. I'm tired, and it's damned cold in this building. I promise to behave myself tonight, if that's what you are worried about”

Monica chuckled again heading for the other side of the bed and climbing carefully under the covers, “ happy?”

Dana nodded and climbed into bed as well. After a moment, she turned to face monica and found her hand beneath the covers, tangling their fingers together before letting her eyes flutter shut. Monica seemed to finally relax as well, whispering, “ Goodnight Dana” as she brushed a kiss across Dana's knuckles.

Dana smiled and squeezed Monica's hand in return before drifting off to sleep. It didn't take long for them to inch closer in their sleep and for Monica's strong arms to tuck her into her side, keeping her warm and safe through the night.

Notes for the Chapter:

whatcha think? I am sorry for the delay folks. I will try to update again once I get my papers written. please excuse any typos, grammar issues, it's late here and I have a presentation in the morning and I wanted to get this out while my muse was cooperating with me. also, check out my other oneshots, both for this universe and regina/emma. I apologize again. I hope to have this story completed by the new year. Happy belated Turkey day.

23. Preparing for War

Notes for the Chapter:

The semester is FINALLY OVER peeps!

Lexa was awake before anyone else. She was restless, and anxiety clawed at her. She slipped out Clarke's arms and left the room as quietly as she could and called her brother, needing to check on her people.

Henry answered the phone groggily, " Yeah, what's wrong Alex?"

Lexa smiled tiredly at the nickname, " Sorry, didn't want to wake you so early, but...."

" You are missing your peeps, I get it. Look. Everything is okay here. Your people are settling in just fine. Turns out, the Arkadians are the perfect go between between your people and ours, and after all the shit that went down over there, they are eager to make amends and help out. We have grounders and arkadians patrolling the borders together on rolling rotations. We have about 100 people in training for the police force. Indra and Octavia are having no problems with your people. The natblida are still training like normal, Aiden's leading the charge there. I know you are anxious, it's hard being away from your people, but I'm handling it."

Lexa felt her shoulders relax some, " Thanks Henry. I knew making you fleimkepa was a wise decision"

Henry sighed, " Truthfully, it's hard being here while you guys are there. Everything's quiet, almost too quiet... like..."

" The quiet before the storm, yeah, it's like that here too. Couldn't sleep. It's like the silence before the first kill of the war"

Henry was silent for a moment, " Alex... everyone's gonna make it back. Right?"

She could hear the twinge of fear in Henry's voice, the unspoken fear, the same anxiety that ran through her own veins. Swallowing around

her own fear, she stated quietly, “Osir ste komba raun houn, Ai swega em klin ” *We are coming home, I swear it.*

The promise was for herself as much as him. This was the greatest danger they had ever faced. And she had none of the confidence of the commanders anymore. She felt hollow, empty without the strength she drew from them. She had come to rely on their guidance. Their constant presence in her mind and it gave her the confidence to lead. Now she was a ship without anchor, clinging to her family until she could find her own strength again.

Henry spoke softly, “ Thanks Alex.... I just... I won’t lose my family again. It’s not an option.”

Lexa found her resolve, “ You won’t. I won’t let anything happen to us again.”

Henry changed the subject, “ speaking of trouble, We had another Gideon sighting, it’s like he’s trapped here. He was spotted trying to leave town last night, but he failed. Trying to step through the barrier around town caused him pain, and Arkadia’s squad chased him into the woods before losing sight of him.”

Lexa tensed, “ Henry... Be careful, he’s a...”

“Dark one, yeah I know. Put that together myself a few days ago. We are working on a way to capture him, make everyone’s job easier when you guys get back here. He’s apparently looking for a way to untether himself from the darkness”

“ He wants free?”

“ No. he wants his own darkness to remain with him. Gramps questioned Belle and she confessed that both Rumple and Gideon are dying. The darkness is feeding on their life forces to stay alive, because something even stronger is feeding on it. Rumple and Gideon were working together to perform a spell like the one Mom did on my heart, making it impossible for an outside source to take their life force. Problem is, the darkness is thier life force. According to Belle, if the darkness dies, so do Rumple and Gideon”

“ Yeah, that’s what we’ve heard too”

“ Yeah, Ma said you guys have some kid there whose...”

“ Super alien human? Yep.”

Henry growled in frustration, “ I have babysitting duty and you guys are over there meeting literal superheroes and aliens. It’s not fair”

“ Well, if it makes you feel better, some of them will be coming back with us to take care of Gideon once we finish off the syndicate...”

Henry whooped, “ Yes, finally!”

Lexa heard footsteps coming down the hall and spotted Raven and Winn with Alex and Maggie, whispering furtively, “ Hey, Henry, something’s up, I gotta go”

“ Okay, have fun training today. Show ‘em how grounders whoop ass”

Lexa chuckled, “ You know I will”

“ Ai hod yu in. Leidon strisis.” *I love you, goodbye sis*

Lexa teared up at Henry’s use of the language that reminded her of home, “ Mebi oso na hit choda op nodotaim bro.” *may we meet again brother*

Lexa hung up, and squared her shoulders. She felt more relaxed now that she knew her people were adjusting fine. She would have rather spoken with Indra, or even Octavia to be sure, but neither had phones yet and she couldn’t justify having Henry trek across town to wake them. It would have to wait.

She approached the group down the hall and Raven tossed her a smirk, “ Couldn’t sleep?”

Lexa shook her head, “ No, you?”

“Nope” Raven shoved a tablet at her, “ I’ve been up for hours, working on getting as much intel as possible. I don’t want any of you

flying blind on this. One dark one is bad enough if A.L.I.E was any indication.” she swiped across the screen and pointed, “Check it out. We managed to spot Rumpel on satellite just outside storybrooke, and tracked him here”

Lexa glanced at the screen and saw a satellite image of a tall building surrounded by other large structures, “ Where is that?”

“ The same warehouse where the syndicate is hiding out”

“ And where is that?”

“ The Starrett-Lehigh Building, 601 W 26th St. It’s in Manhattan, right on the water. The problem is, the building is huge,19 stories, 2.3 million square feet. It’s full of businesses, firms. And it’s a famous location. They literally couldn’t have picked a worse place for us.”

“ I thought you guys said it was empty.”

Winn nodded, “ Thing is, it was during the health crisis, but now that everything’s getting back to normal, they’ve resumed normal operations. Clearing the building without drawing attention is impossible.”

Maggie frowned, “ Can we bring the NYPD in on this?”

Alex shook her head, “ Aliens I might be able to get them to ignore, but magic? Dark ones? No way. It has to be DEO, Cadmus, you guys. We can’t involve anyone who isn't already involved. As it is, it’s going to be a monumental effort., anyone else, and we will be looking at a mass casualty situation almost immediately. We have to be careful and subtle in how we go about this, or we don't stand a chance”

Winn smirked at his tablet, “ I could always trip the fire alarm...”

Alex glared at him, “ That’s the opposite of subtle Winn”

Lexa frowned, “ Do they ever leave?”

Winn shook his head, “And the building is never really empty of civilians either. Its right on the waterfront, right in the middle of everything. We literally cannot make a move on them there without

them knowing. There's no subtle way in that I can find"

Raven took back the tablet and swiped through the floor plans, "What if we had everyone pose as drivers? Doesn't the building have truck access on every floor?"

"How's that even possible? Lexa asked.

"Ramps, and elevators I think. Worth a shot. Could pretend to be bringing in a shipment, get as close as possible, trip the fire alarm once already inside and in position. That clears everyone else out, leaves them trapped"

Lexa shuddered, "I don't like it, but it may be the only option. Cornering dark ones and super soldiers seems like a very bad idea, and we have to consider the possibility that they could have them in place throughout the building. How do you spot a supersoldier anyway?"

"You don't. Not until you are under attack and by then it's too late."

Raven was pensive and thoughtful. Lexa could almost see the cogs in her head moving as she tried to come up with anything to even the odds, "We could see if we can't make shields from that compound William told us about, it might make it easier for them to sense us but it could give us some leverage against the super soldiers as well"

Winn nodded, "Great idea, line the inside of the trucks with it as well. We have to draw them out of their offices though, or Clark and Kara won't be able to do much, from what we can tell the whole 17th floor is lead lined, most likely lead based paint. So they can help with baddies on other floors, but you guys are on your own up there"

"I can help with that" Lexa turned around and smiled at an exhausted Lena Luthor, Kara right behind. "My mother has a warehouse full of that iron based compound. She's already formulated countless ways to mix it with other substances. Should be a simple matter of creating a poly coating we can use on armor, weapons, whatever you guys need. Lillian has perfected the formula to inject the super soldiers with, I can get my team on making darts so they can be fired"

“ It has be potent enough to kill” Lexa warned.

“Not a problem.”

“What? No? No killing, we are the good guys” Kara protested.

Lena shook her head, “ Darling, this fight isn’t one you can win by punching bad guys into submission. This is pure, unadulterated evil. The only way to win this fight is to kill.”

Kara’s frown deepened and Lexa placed a restraining hand on her arm, “ She’s right and you know it. This is different than any fight you’ve faced before Kara. It’s going to require all of us to be willing to do things we’ve never done before”

“ Oh, are you darlings planning death and destruction without me? Rude” Zelena peeked over Raven’s shoulder.

Lexa smirked at her aunt. “ We are trying to find a subtle way into the building and clearing civilians without alerting them that we are there”

“ Always missing the obvious solutions are we?”

Lexa arched a brow, “ And what would you suggest?”

“ Well, as your charming mother always suggests, poof em out”

Raven shook her head laughing, “ You want us to poof five thousand employees and countless more guests out of the building without a host of dark ones noticing”

“ Right, forgot about that bit”

“ She may be onto something though. We need a way to clear that building quickly. Faster than they can detect and subtle enough to not draw attention. The fire alarm’s too loud, an anonymous tip of a bomb or anything like that’s just as bad.”

“ What about an immobilization spell and then cast a containment/ protection spell over the rest of the building. No one moves, no one remembers, and it keeps everyone inside from harm, everyone

outside from entering” Emma suggested as she and Regina joined the growing group.

Regina nodded thoughtfully, “ It could work. We wait until we are already inside, cast it once inside, keeps everything contained, they don't sense the magic until it's too late.”

Emma nodded, “To pull it off we need more magic users though. This is far too big an endeavor to take on alone. I think it's time we call everyone in. this is going to take an army. We are going to need every magic user we can get our hands on.”

“ What about Storybrooke, we can't leave them unprotected. Remember, we still have a dark one trapped there” Zelena reminded them.

“ Leave that to me.” Lexa stated, stepping away to call her brother. Regina frowned and followed her daughter down the hall away from the others, “ Are you sure your army can handle...”

“ Nomoun, Wich ai in. Teik ai tich emo kaina uf oso gada in” *Mother, trust me. Let me show you how strong we are.*

Lexa watched her mother process her words, a smirk tugging at her lips as the frown on Regina's face morphed into understanding. Regina nodded firmly, “ Bi moba Leksa. Ai op yu uf.” *I am sorry Lexa. I see your strength*

Lexa nodded and offered her mother a gentle smile. She knew Regina was having as much trouble adjusting to her returned memories as she was herself. Lexa turned to the group, “ I'm calling Henry again, what should I tell him, aside from mobilizing my army?”

Emma sighed, “ As much as I hate to do it, call in Elsa from Arendale. Have Mal track down Ursula if she can, have them all meet us here in two days if at all possible. I have a few friends I'll call in too. We need everyone here as quickly as possible”

Lexa caught the flicker of anxiety in Regina's expression at those words, “ You're leaving?”

Emma nodded, “ As much as I hate to do it, yes. This is bigger than

us Regina”

“ Bigger than a planet wide shield?”

Emma nodded firmly, “ You know as well as I do Regina that we barely managed that. We are talking about taking on dozens of dark ones, untold numbers of super soldiers. We can’t do this alone, you know that”

Lexa watched her mother's interact, knew Regina sensed the same thing Lexa did. There was something Emma wasn't saying. Something she was still holding back, trying to protect them. Emma was up to something, something that made Regina nervous. Lexa however, knew her blonde mother well enough to know that what Regina thought Emma was up to and what she was actually likely planning were two very different things. Emma Swan was a force to be reckoned with, and if she thought they needed more help, Lexa trusted her mother's judgement. More than that, Emma was clever. Everything she knew about being a leader, about making tough calls, about catching your enemy off guard came from her blonde mother. Lexa caught her mother's eye and beckoned her away from the group with a tilt of her head. Emma arched her brow at Lexa but followed her.

Lexa swallowed and met her mother's gaze head on, “ Ste kefa nomoun.” *Be careful mother*

“Otaim” *always* Emma stated with a wink. Seeing the concern in her daughter's eyes, Emma wrapped her in a hug, “ I'm coming back Lexa. Swega ai klin” *I swear it.*

Lexa nodded firmly, “ Go. Hurry back. Mom's anxious when you aren't around. We need you here”

Emma nodded, “ I'll be back in two days. I swear. Keep everyone safe. Train, push them hard. Like I did with you, no mercy. We can't afford to be sentimental with these people. I'm counting on you Lexa. They need to understand exactly what we are going up against here”

Lexa nodded, “ I will, I promise. Do you want me to bring in the Trivoka-Granplei?”

Emma paused and seemed to consider it for a long time, before asking, “ Do you think they can handle it?”

Lexa nodded firmly, “ They are my fiercest warriors, trained by Indra and myself, just as you trained me”

Emma nodded, “ Do it then.”

“ Where are you going? Who are you bringing in?”

Emma winked, “ Can’t give away all my secrets. Trust me. CSM and those assholes will never see it coming”

Emma went back to the group, gave everyone hugs, held Regina for a long moment before releasing her with a kiss, changing her clothes to that of Dark Swan and disappearing in a cloud of grey with a smirk.

Lexa gave her brunette mother a firm hug before adopting her mantle as Heda and ordered everyone to the training room. They had no idea what they were in for for the next few days. Clarke had some idea and her expression matched Lexa’s, fierce, and harsh. Everyone blinked at her and Lexa lowered her voice, taking on the note of deadly calm that she knew would get her point across better than barking at them. “ Emma left it to me to prepare you for what’s coming, and that’s exactly what I intend to do. So for the next few days, consider yourselves under my command. You will train until I say you can stop. You will sleep when I say, you will not eat, until I give you permission. You will follow every order I give without question. If you do not, you will not survive what we are about to face.”

Regina stiffened at her daughter’s tone, but Lexa remained firm. Usually I have a few weeks to turn soldiers into Trivoka- Granplei, but all we have is a few days, so there is no time to waste.”

Kara frowned, “Trivoka what now?”

“ Trivoka Granplei” Clarke stated, “ Shadow trained. The top secret elite unit of grounder soldiers. They far surpass the skill of this world’s black ops. A handful can take down an entire army”

Lexa frowned, “ You know of them? How? I never...”

Clarke laughed, “ Rowan? I did some investigating when you were entirely unconcerned about fighting him. Indra explained that you trained them yourself.”

Lexa nodded, “ and now I will train all of you. We need to act and think as a unit.”

J’onn frowned, “ No offense Lexa but my men...”

“ Don’t stand a chance against the enemy we are about to face.” Alex interrupted, “ And you know it. If Emma thinks training under Lexa could help us, then we do that. We follow her orders for a few days. It can’t hurt J’onn, or have you forgotten that Emma Swan can run circles around you blindfolded and hands cuffed behind her back?”

J’onn growled, “ You swore we’d never speak of that again.”

Alex shook her head, “ And I wouldn’t, except Lexa’s right and you know it. If you, a green martian, and five whole squads of the best DEO has to offer couldn’t handle one dark one, how the hell do you expect us to take on an army of them? We’ve both fought Emma. We’ve both trained with her, and we’ve fought her daughter and we still don’t have what it takes. I don’t know about you, but I agree with Lexa. We need the training.”

J’onn nodded, his expression grim, “ Fine, we do it her way”

“ Training room, now.” Lexa barked and everyone trudged after Kara who seemed oddly eager to spar.

Lexa squared her shoulders and raised her head, accepting the responsibility Emma had placed on her shoulders. It was oddly comforting to have something productive to do, far better than the last few weeks where she felt listless, and worse, useless. She knew how to lead, she simply needed the authority to do it. She knew how to teach, she just needed the chance. And Emma had recognized that and provided both.

Bringing up the rear of the group, She called her brother again.

“ Henry, it’s time.” She listed off everything he needed to do and she could hear him scribbling furiously as he wrote it all down.

“ You’ve got it sis. Reinforcements will be on their way shortly, and your troops will be mobilized.”

“ Have Indra bring the Trivoka Granplei”

“ Isn't that...?”

“ Yes” Lexa stated simply and Henry chuckled nervously, “ shit’s about to get real isn’t it?”

Lexa confirmed his concern and he promised to pass the word along and send everyone he could. Henry sounded as tense as she was, sensing the magnitude of what was about to happen. Still, her brother was like her, he had grown into the responsibility he now carried, and he was ready. She knew Henry was a strong capable leader and that her army would respect his orders. Still, she told him, “Remind them that their Heda demands the same loyalty to her family as to herself. Your orders are mine”

She could hear Henry’s grin as he replied, “ Sha Heda”

She wished him luck and hung up, giving her mother a nod and a reassuring smile as she reminded her, “ He is no longer a child nomoun. He is a warrior, a crown Prince and my fleimkepa. My people honor him and his authority to rule. Our people will be safe”

Regina swallowed and nodded. In the last few minutes, Lexa had seen the shift in everyone. Everyone adopted their mantle, their role in this fight. She was Heda, commander and unifier of the clans. Everyone here was a warrior, and they knew it.

Glancing about the training room, she could see everyone pairing up and beginning their training exercises. She ran them through drills, had them fight each other, then utilized the training systems designed to pinpoint hier weaknesses. In a matter of hours they had improved dramatically, and while they all showed signs of fatigue, Lexa refused to relent. She was Heda, and it was her job to prepare the people she loved for the biggest challenge they have ever faced. The Swan-Mills family was about to go to war.

Notes for the Chapter:

Who do you think Emma is going to go bring in? any guesses? ;-)

24. Calling in Reinforcements

Cat Grant found herself on her private jet once more, headed back to Storybrooke. She couldn't really complain. She had no special abilities, but she had money, and with money came certain advantages that she wanted to use to help. From the beginning, everyone had made it known she was a part of the group, a valuable asset to the team. She knew her (self appointed) job was to boost morale and provide support for the growing army of heroes assembling to take on the greatest threat they had ever encountered. So when Kara called and updated her on the latest, Cat jumped at the chance to help, immediately offering her plane to the cause, as well as her services babysitting. Carter was further back on the plane playing the latest pokemon game on his nintendo. He had jumped at the chance to get out of National City and meet some of his favorite storybook characters in real life, as well as to see magic up close and personal.

In truth, Cat Grant was considering making a change, a big one. She wanted to retire and Storybrooke was quiet enough and interesting enough to hold her interest. She wanted to train someone and then hand over Catco to someone trustworthy, so that she could watch over the company from a distance and focus on her rapidly growing son. Storybrooke was more and more looking like the logical choice. She knew Regina was particular about the education children received there, the town was relatively safe, crime was lower, and she would be close to her new friends, while able to stay in constant contact with her current friends. The Swan Mills family fascinated her, and she wanted to be a part of their world. When Regina had mentioned that Sidney had left and Storybrooke needed someone to take over the local print media, Cat Grant saw an opportunity too good to pass up.

So here she sat, on her way back, with Regina seated across her on the plane, her hands twisting anxiously in her lap. Cat couldn't help but find her obvious discomfort amusing, "Relax Queenie"

Regina glared at her and Cat smirked at the lack of heat behind it. Regina was scared. Scared for her family, scared for Henry, scared for

Emma who had left to find additional help. And it didn't help that Regina abhorred planes.

Reaching across the aisle, Cat squeezed her hand, “ Everything will work out”

“ You can't know that” Regina snapped.

Cat shrugged, “ Maybe not. But you know what? I'm not worried. I meant what I said before the rocket launches, I've never seen a more capable group of people.”

“ Expecting a quarter? Regina sneered.

Zelena exited the bathroom and arched a brow at her sister, “ Come on Reggie, that was harsh, even for you”

Regina sighed and gave Cat an apologetic look, “ I admit it, I'm worried. I don't like us being split up right before all hell breaks loose”

“ That's why we are going home. To check on our young ones and bring in more help. Cat has been nothing but helpful throughout this whole mess, and she offered her plane. Be nice”

Regina arched a brow at her, “ I can't believe you of all people are telling me to play nicely”

Zelena smirked, “ I know right? Look at me being all hero like”

Cat watched their interaction with amusement, noting that the distraction helped Regina's shoulders relax and the grip on her armrest lose some of the tension. Zelena sat beside her sister and bumped her shoulders, “ Cat's right, freaking out doesn't do anyone any good. Our family has always pulled through before, this time will be no different”

Regina nodded, “ I know, it's just... the stakes seem higher than ever before, there's a lot more to lose”

“ Which is exactly why we won't. Think about it Regina, everything that has happened has led us here. And along the way our family, our

support system has grown drastically. We have an amazing, powerful family. And our family is seriously kickass”

Cat nodded her agreement, trying and failing to hide her amusement. Regina arched a brow at her but relaxed a little more into her seat, her expression softening, “ it will be nice to see Henry and Robyn, even for a few minutes”

Cat caught the wistful look on Zelena’s face, “ It will, won’t it? I get it now, your anxiety over leaving Henry behind. God, leaving Robyn was the hardest thing I’ve ever done. I can’t wait to hold her. Is it weird that I miss the way she smells?”

Both Regina and Cat shook their heads, “ No, it’s not.”

Cat glanced back at her son, oblivious to everything around him, completely lost in trying to find a shiny Nidoking, whatever the hell that was. Her son’s had grown up fast, way too fast, a sentiment Regina agreed with, “ They do. It seems like it was yesterday that I was bringing Henry home for the first time”

Cat grinned at the matching wistful looks on the Mills’ faces as they thought about their respective children.

Cat spoke softly, “ You know, whatever happens in the next few days, I am glad to have met your family, glad to have been able to experience your world in some small way. I am glad to count you as my friends”

Regina nodded seriously and Zelena smirked, “ Well that was disgustingly sweet”

Cat laughed as her captain asked them to buckle their seatbelts as they were approaching the barrier over the town. Cat watched Regina grit her teeth and close her eyes as the plane shook violently as it passed through the barrier. Once they landed Regina glanced at her sister, “ Remind me to make the barrier accessible to the plane.”

Zelena, looking a bit green nodded, “ Definitely a good idea, especially if people are going to be going back and forth frequently. In fact, we should take care of that before we leave tomorrow.”

Cat ushered them off the plane and grinned when Henry barrelled into his brunette mother, forgetting for a moment that anyone else was there. Regina held him tightly, murmuring to him softly as Snow approached Zelena with Robyn. Her son Neal sat in his stroller, sound asleep.

Glancing around, Cat could tell Henry was taking his responsibilities seriously. The plane was surrounded by Grounders, Arkadians and Storybrooke's newest deputies. Everyone looked serious and grim. Tension hung heavily in the air and Cat wondered if something else had happened.

Regina sensed it too, "What's going on Henry? Why all this?"

Regina gestured to the small army surrounding them. Henry's expression reflected his concern, "We should get out of the open first, then I will explain"

Cat motioned Carter over and murmured, "Stay close to me. Do not wander off." Carter's game was in his hand, ignored in favor of looking around. She pointed to the game, "put that away" Carter nodded and obeyed immediately, sensing that the situation was serious. He stuck close to her and stared at Henry who was in armored leathers, another young boy and two young women by his side. They were all young, but their expressions betrayed a maturity far beyond their years. Carter was clearly impressed by their appearance.

Henry refused to say anything until they were safely inside town hall, in the Mayor's office with the door closed. David and Mal were waiting inside with matching grim looks. Cat left Carter outside the room with Snow and the young ones and stepped inside.

Henry sighed in relief, "Sorry, been a lot going on this morning, we weren't taking any chances"

"Gideon?"

"Yes, he's been turning Storybrooke upside down. He's clearly looking for something. He's hurt a few people this morning, all minor injuries luckily, but he vanishes just before anyone shows up to stop

him. We've been working on a plan to contain him, but we think he stole the magic cuffs we were going to use to inhibit his magic. It's like he knows what we are up to and we can't figure out how."

Regina growled in frustration and Mal placed a hand on her arm, "Relax 'Gina, we can handle one dark one. Your son is doing an amazing job. Everyone is safe."

Cat watched them plan, tossing out ideas, Regina frequently rolling her eyes at the Charming's suggestions. Cat bit her lip and waited for a while before stepping in, "there's a rather obvious solution you are all missing"

"What's that?" Henry looked desperate, and she pointed to him, "You are the author yes?"

He nodded, head tilting in curiosity

"You can't directly affect someone's free will, but you can influence circumstances and behavior indirectly right?"

He nodded again, his eyes shining as he started to catch on. She continued, "from what I hear, you can write things into existence and so far you've been trying to write in obstacles, rather than anything that could actually contain him. All you need is a call, a location and you could easily create the trap around him rather than trying to get there first..."

Henry nodded, "We've tried that. The issue is him not sensing it, hence why we can't cage him. We need the cuffs to dampen his magic"

"Is there a pattern to where he's breaking in?"

Henry frowned and the younger of the two young women behind him spoke up, "actually yes, he seems to be targeting places containing magic. All types. Stealing magical items, books, etc"

"Any locations containing those items he hasn't hit yet?" Cat pressed

The brunette nodded, her expression thoughtful, "Yes, Emma's house and the author's house."

Cat arched a brow, “ Perfect. Anticipate Henry. Think ahead. If there’s a pattern to his behavior you can predict his next move. And if you can do that, you can control the narrative, take back control over the situation”

Henry grinned, “ Thanks!” he dashed around the desk and pulled out his pen and book, and began writing furiously.

Regina tossed Cat a grateful look, “ Is everyone ready to fly out first thing in the morning?”

David nodded, “ We’ve contacted everyone, Lincoln is having them meet us at the plane first thing in the morning. Everything is ready.”

He sighed and ran a hand through his hair “ I hate sitting this out”

“ You aren’t” Cat pointed out, beating Regina to it, “ We are at war. National City is one front, this is another, as is New York. This is a war, and you need strong leadership here to keep everyone safe. Henry needs you, everyone here does. This is your part to play”

He nodded, “ I know I’m just an action guy, sitting around waiting for Gideon to make a move is driving me nuts”

“ Dont do anything exceptionally stupid Charming.”

Regina gave him a hard warning look and he grinned sheepishly and mock saluted, “ Yes ma’am”

Henry glanced up grinning, “ Perfect. It’s done. Now all we do is wait”

Cat gave him a thumbs up and followed the group to Granny’s, where they were joined by more of Storybrooke’s eclectic residents. Old and new. Cat listened as they filled in their mayor on the latest gossip and watched her son interact with Henry and Aiden. Octavia and Ontari, the brunette who had helpfully supplied intel on Gideon’s movements teased the boys about the video games they discussed. Cat sat back and watched, until snow sat beside her and casually passed off her son. Cat shook her head with a smile. She could see exactly why Regina was often irritated with them. Their approach to life, to family and parenting left her confused and irritated. It was pretty

easy to tell why Emma had some trust issues. Snow wasn't intentionally an ass, but she was certainly careless and selfish. Cat glanced at little Neal and wrapped him up a little more snugly in his blanket nodding that she was okay when Regina glanced over and rolled her eyes.

Zelena sat beside her a moment later, Robyn in her arms, cooing at her young daughter and her cousin.

Eventually Snow returned and collected her son without so much as a thanks and Cat glared at her retreating figure. Regina apologize, "They mean well but..."

"Their completely uncharming idiots?" Cat finished and Regina nodded with a sigh.

Regina motioned towards the door, "Come on, let's go home. It's getting late and we have an early start tomorrow"

Cat nodded as she followed Regina towards a black mercedes, "I wanted to ask..."

"If you could stay here with Carter and help out rather than fly back with us?"

Cat arched a brow at her and Regina laughed, "I would feel better if you did honestly. Another pair of eyes to keep an eye on things."

Cat sighed with relief, "Thanks. I just, there's not a lot I can do at this point, and I want to be useful, and Carter...."

"is way too young to be on the frontlines, I understand and I agree. He will be safe here. You are welcome to stay at my home until this passes, help keep things under control you are pretty good at managing and I feel better having someone more responsible here with Henry"

The fact that she was referring to the irresponsible Charmings went unsaid. Cat agreed with her heartily, "Thank you. I will do everything I can to keep everyone safe"

Regina nodded, "I know. I'm glad you will be here"

The evening was pleasant. The younger adults and kids took the evening to play dungeons and dragons while the adults got to know one another better. Everyone avoided discussing the danger they were about to face and Cat could tell Regina was trying not to worry about Emma and her family back in National City training for battle.

Cat squeezed her shoulder in silent understanding that night before retreating to the guest bedroom and collapsing into bed.

The next morning, Cat woke early and headed downstairs following her nose. She found Ontari and Octavia in the kitchen side by side cooking breakfast. Ontari pointed out the coffee pot and Cat grunted in thanks. Regina joined them a few moments later, looking very unlike the mayor she was familiar with. Regina caught her staring and smirked, “ battle armor. She stated and Cat nodded that she understood. Regina was in an armored leather dress, leather tights. Her appearance was fierce, and she looked like the grounders Cat had met on her first trip here. A tall strongly built man came in and kissed Octavia warmly before turning to Regina all business, “ Everyone is assembled and ready. Bellamy’s crew, and your magic users are assembling now.”

Regina nodded, her expression grim, “Good. Has everyone eaten?”

He nodded, “ and already by the plane awaiting your orders your Majesty”

Cat choked on her coffee, suddenly remembering her newest friend was royalty. In all the excitement over the last few weeks, the amount of power this family wielded had all but slipped her mind.

Regina smirked at her before returning her attention to the man in front of her, “ Thank you Lincoln. Are you sure you want to come back with me? I would understand if you decided to remain behind, Lexa would too”

He shook his head firmly, “ Ai badannes ste kamp raun ai Heda.” He paused, remembering that some in the room didn’t understand trigedasleng and switched to english easily, “My commander needs me. Octavia will be fine here with the others. I am Heda’s Captain,

our people will take notice if I pick and choose which orders I will follow”

Regina nodded, “ Very well. I will see you on board Captain”

He gave her a sharp nod and a slight bow before tugging Octavia aside to say goodbye. Cat watched them with interest, before turning her attention back to the brunette still in the kitchen noting Ontari’s frown. She finally seemed to work up the courage to address Regina “ does Heda have orders for me?”

Regina gave her a gentle smile, “ You, Aiden and Octavia are Henry’s advisors. You are fleimkepa, and a member of the royal guard. Your duty is to protect Heda’s family and enforce her orders here”

Ontari nodded, her expression still a bit lost. Regina noticed, “ Ontari, she would not leave you here to protect her brother if she did not trust you completely. You are natblida, and you have completely redeemed yourself. Make no mistake, you are as much a member of this family as Lincoln and Octavia. Do you understand?”

Ontari’s brown eyes shone with unshed tears as she straightened her posture and bowed in respect, “ Sha Ai Haiplana” *Yes my queen*

Regina gave her an affectionate smile and dismissed her. Ontari hurried back to the kitchen and began serving the food as Henry and Aiden wandered in. Cat noticed the strong connection between the boys. They were like brothers, and got along well. Henry seemed to trust Aiden’s council when dealing with the grounders, and Aiden looked to him for advice on how to blend into Storybrooke.

They ate breakfast quietly, and Cat watched as the tension began to build again in anticipation. Tomorrow, her friends would go to battle, against an enemy unlike any other.

And she would be here, helping keep everyone calm, giving whatever aid she could to a town under siege by a dark one on the loose. Regina didn’t say much on the way back to the plane. She did give Cat a warm hug and ask her to stay safe and keep an eye on her kids. Cat chuckled and promised to do exactly that. She debated giving another hope speech, Regina looked like she could use one but

Regina gave her a look that implied she knew what the blonde was thinking and warned against it. Cat laughed instead and reminded her that they needed to change the barrier spell before leaving.

Cat watched in fascination as the magic users worked together to morph the barrier, allowing passage for Cat's plane specifically. It still prevented any others from easily crossing the barrier without a storybrooke resident inside and strengthened the magic trapping gideon within the town's limits. It was all they could do, the rest would be up to Henry's skills as the author. And he had staunchly refused to reveal what he wrote, in case Gideon indeed had an ally within Storybrooke. Cat waved as the plane took off and turned back to the group gathered on the road, " Alright, let's get to work"

Regina watched Storybrooke grow smaller beneath her as they ascended. she knew she was squeezing the life out of Zelena's hand and Regina actually found herself missing Cat Grant's obnoxious speeches. She could use the distraction right about now. Lincoln sat across from her, and Indra joined them, her expression fiercely determined, laying out the blueprints Henry had given them after using his sisters hacking program to obtain them. Regina watched and listened as the grounders strategized, occasionally adding in her input. Her mind was largely elsewhere, wondering what her daughters were doing in National City, wondering where Emma was at the moment. She could still feel the thread of Emma's magic connecting them, but it was weaker than normal, and Regina knew her true love was not in this realm. Regina leaned back against the seat and closed her eyes, and sent her love a plea to remain safe and return quickly. She didn't want to face the battle tomorrow without Emma's strength by her side.

25. the Deep Breath Before the Plunge

Notes for the Chapter:

warning: PLOT TWISTS ahead. lol. if you were paying SUPER close attention you probably saw the biggy coming, but maybe not. lol.

“ When will they arrive?”

“ They plan to move against us tomorrow. We will need to move quickly if we wish to regain the advantage”

“ Leave that to me.” a pause, then “ Exercise caution. We cannot afford to lose access at this late stage”

Silence on the other end, then a click. The conversation with his plant at the DEO was over and he handed off the phone with a sigh before nodding. The woman moved around him easily and he stood, stretching his muscles before leaving the room.

He glanced at her, “ Tell the others we will be expecting company tomorrow morning. Preparations need to be completed with the utmost haste”

She nodded and left swiftly, leaving him to his own devices. With a sigh he fished his pack of Morley’s from his suit pocket and carefully lit the cigarette. Holding it lightly between his fingers he puffed on it for a moment and sighed.

After all these years, after all his work, tomorrow would be the defining moment. The moment that determined if his work would pay off, or if it had all been done in vain. He frowned. The news that Dark Swan had vanished, off to collect aid elsewhere was troubling indeed. He hated unforeseen events. He prided himself on his ability to predict, to prepare and account for all possibilities. It was the only reason he had survived thus far. But Dark Swan had always eluded him. She was like him once, cold, calculating, a wielder of great power, a holder of great truths, a seeker of secrets. She, like him could predict the future, and he wondered now if she hadn’t somehow retained that ability, even after expelling

purity, he wondered if somehow she had managed to retain it's power.

The others had repeatedly assured him that was impossible, but he knew better. Dark Swan was not to be underestimated. Like Mulder, like Dana, and Monica, Dark Swan was resistant to manipulation from outside sources. While Mulder often fell for more subtle traps, dragging Dana down with him by default, Monica had played him with ease, a trait he now knew she had learned from Dark Swan herself. His colleagues were confident of their victory, but he was not so sure. And he knew it was always safer to hedge one's bets when dealing with the unknown.

Grabbing the abandoned burner phone on his mahogany desk he called a familiar number, "it seems we may need that contingency plan after all"

He listened and stated calmly, "If I am correct, she is bringing in outside help"

He listened again, "you still cannot recall any of it?" he frowned. "what about him?" he listened to the drivelng man for a moment as he made excuses before abruptly cutting him off, his tone laced with annoyance, "no, you must recover them. Whatever it takes. We cannot fail, not when we are so close to attaining our goal."

He chuckled sardonically, "you leave them to me, I made a promise that I will keep, they will burn. You hold up our end, and I will hold up mine"

"Are you questioning my commitment?" his tone hardened and the man on the other end apologized, "Good. Complete your task, and your wish will be granted."

He hung up and took another drag of his cigarette before crushing it in the ashtray and heading down the hall to meet the others. They were talking in hushed tones as he entered and he put up the mask of confidence. He spotted Gold, aka Rumplestiltskin at the center and barely disguised his disgust for the man. He didn't bother to address Rumplestiltskin, ignoring him in favor of revealing what he new to the group. Gold was irrelevant. Tomorrow he would no longer exist if everything went according to plan. In fact, if everything went according to plan, he would be the only one standing out of this group. With that thought he took a deep breath and explained the latest news to the group. They talked, orders were given and soldiers moved swiftly to carry them out.

Still, he was tense. His inside men could still be found out, and if they were, their plans would go to hell. They were so close now. Failing was not an option.

The streets of Storybrooke were dark. The curfew had gone into effect two hours ago and all was still. Nevertheless, Ontari was restless., as were the other natblida. She could feel evil in the town. Something, someone, maybe even more than one was up to something. She could sense it, her natblida connected her to the darkness making her antsy. Glancing at Aiden, she could see the same anxiety in his gaze. They stayed close to Henry, keeping a watchful eye on their surroundings as Henry checked out the location hit earlier that day, Gold's shop. Everything was tossed about drawers empty and tossed about, the safe wide open. David dusted for fingerprints as Aiden and Ontari followed Henry about, the glass crunching under their feet. Every so often, Ontari would sense someone watching from the shadows, turn only to find nothing but darkness. Her skin itched from the dark magic hanging in the air.

A floorboard creaked under her feet and she froze, staring at the rug beneath her feet. They were in the back of the shop away from the windows, anyone's view from outside obscured so she carefully pulled the rug back and called Henry and David over softly. She pointed to the small board with loose nails holding it down. She had seen Gold's shop before and knew the man was meticulous, and it was highly unlikely the man didn't know that his floor needed repairs. David carefully pried the board up, and Ontari reached down into the dark hole beneath, tugging out a small locked box. She frowned and passed it off to David. The man dug through the countless keys Gold owned before settling on a small one and inserting it in the lock. They watched as he flipped open the lid and shone the flashlight on the dreamcatchers inside.

Ontari reached for the one sitting on top and then froze abruptly as a dark voice suddenly spoke, "I'll take that" the voice sounded familiar, but the lights were still out and when David tried to shine a light on the intruder, his flashlight slammed into a wall and shattered. "I said, "I'll take that."The voice was dark with anger, a thinly veiled rage bubbling beneath. She could sense the darkness coming off the figure in waves. It was clearly a man's voice, and while he was clearly trying to disguise it as to not be recognized, But Ontari couldn't shake the feeling that it was

Gideon.

“ I don’t want to have to hurt anyone, but if you don’t return what’s mine, I will”

David still hesitated and the figure yanked it from his hands. Ontari caught the glint of metal in the light and then the figure was gone, leaving as silently as he had come.

Outside Gold’s, another figure tucked away his cellphone and hid himself in the darkness as Gideon left the shop, glancing around furtively while clutching the box in his hands. His lips curled into a sneer as he slinked further back into the shadows. Gold thought he had successfully killed his son and stolen his power, a clever deception created by Gideon to preserve his own life. The figure watching him leave his father’s shop though wasn’t fooled. He knew Gideon would seek to resolidify his position as a Dark One, try to hang on to what power he had left, while severing himself from the others. The dreamcatchers held the answer as to how. Gideon, weak as he was, was recovering rapidly. And now he knew his father’s plan. A plan known also to the figure stalking Gideon, since it was his plan in the first place. A plan he would take back. He followed the man down the street, silently inching closer as the man headed for the docks, and grinned. This was perfect. Here he could easily strike his opponent down, and take back what Gold had stolen from him when he stole back the dark one, rather than let him destroy it with sacrifice

Gideon snuck aboard the Jolly Roger, thinking he had succeeded in keeping his presence hidden from the owner of the vessel until the blade glinted briefly before it slammed into him from behind.

Hook chuckled in his ear, as his hood fell away, revealing him to his enemy’s son “ Thought all the dark ones didn’t know you were still alive, didn’t you mate?”

Gideon groaned as hot blood spilled from his chest, and bubbled in his throat, he collapsed to the ground and Hook stood over him, watching Gideon’s name disappear from the dagger in his hand and his own name appear. He had been waiting for months for an opportunity to take back what had been stolen from him. Unbeknownst to CSM, Gold and Gideon,

Hook had already retrieved his memories from the Dreamcatchers, months ago. Chuckling, he waved his hand over Gideon's body, making Gideon look like himself, Killian Jones. Anyone who found the body would assume he was Emma Swan's dead ex boyfriend, murdered by the Dark one. Hook glamourised himself to be Gideon and leaving the Jolly Roger as quietly as he had come. He tucked the dagger away and grinned. No, he would not be so easily dispatched, and by the end of the day tomorrow, he and only one other would remain as the dark ones, and then, as Hook had planned all those years ago, Hook would destroy him, taking all of Purity for himself.

Emma was speaking to her assembled group when her vision shifted. She watched the events unfold and growled in frustration. The future kept shifting, their enemies were frustratingly still one step ahead, but now... now Emma knew who her enemies were.

Smirking she glanced at the group, “ There’s one more realm we need to go to”

“Where?” Eretria asked, “ seems like you’ve brought literally everyone. There’s over fifty people here as it is.”

“ It’s not enough. What I just saw... things just got more complicated. We need to go back to where all this began... the first realm to deal with Purity. Though then, it went by another name...”

“ What name is that?”Aaliyah Wolfe asked with a frown.

Serana beside her shuddered, “ You are referring to the story of Vaatu aren’t you?” being a several millennium old vampire had left Serana with plenty of time to read about other realms legends, and Emma had helpfully supplied her with thousands of books on various realms during her brief visit to castle Volkihar over two thousand years ago, well before Seran found herself locked away. Serana had requested it to help pass the time long before her companion Aaliyah Wolfe was roaming Skyrim. Emma had visited multiple times throughout Serana’s early years, relying on that library and Serana’s perfect memory for information. Aaliyah was Skyrim’s DragonBorn, and most likely Skyrim's first vampire, lycan hybrid to become High Queen in a

few weeks at the Moot after Ulfric Stormcloak had died of mysterious causes.

Next to Serana, Carmilla was practically an infant, only 300 some odd years old to serana's over 4000.

Emma nodded solemnly at her friends, " We need to go find the Avatar. I'm afraid without her, we won't be able to contain this" The witches further back nodded their agreement, even with their numbers, this was a massive undertaking.

" Another portal jump? Joy!" Carmilla's tone was decidedly sarcastic and her girlfriend Laura chuckled at her, " she' will get over it, she's just sore about not landing on her feet last time."

" You sure you can't just dump us off in... wherever the hell we are going?" Carmilla asked, and Emma shook her head firmly, " No. The only advantage we have is the fact that they have no idea where I went or who I am bringing, although, it won't take long for Hook or the others to figure it out. Time is not on our side right now, so we need to move fast"

Everyone groaned but gathered around Emma for yet another realm jump. There was only a few hours left before the attack begun. And Emma had sworn she would be by Regina's side when it all went down. She was doing her damndest to make good on her word.

Notes for the Chapter:

and... there. now you have a few names teased about whose gonna be at the big battle. Were some of the names who you expected? That's NOT a complete list. I may have to list all the names in the notes of the next two chapters, there's SOOOO Many. remember Emma went to a ton of realms. anyway, that's all for tonight. hopefully this gets you guys excited. it won't be long now. big battle chapter will be written and hopefully uploaded tomorrow.

Wolfie, you should recognize one name in particular ;-).I hope you like my take on her. I tried to keep it fairly true to what you came up with. well, some

aspects anyway. you did give me permission to switch a few things up, so naturally, I did ;-)

26. Battle on 26th Street

Notes for the Chapter:

part one of two for the big battle. Part two will be up tonight as well. so stick around ;-)

Lena sat in the van across the intersection from the giant building. She watched the screens in front of her and Winn nervously.

She had spent the last few days formulating as much of the iron compound as possible and using it for weapons and coating for everyone's armor while everyone else trained constantly. Kara had even called in her crew. Unfortunately only Barry and Green Arrow could be spared, but that was enough because wherever Oliver went, Felicity followed and offered her tech skills to the effort as well.

Yesterday Lena had dipped everyone's gear in the substance, their guns, their armor, their clothes, everything. The trucks were painted in it. She had done everything she could to make sure everyone had what they needed, from compound tipped arrows for Oliver, to darts for Alex and the DEO's guns. She had even insisted that all the heroes, including Kara allowed her to completely soak their suits in the stuff. It made the suits considerably heavier and they took the day to practice fighting in their new suits. Lillian had spent the night working with Lena to ensure that the magic users had plenty of spells to keep their magic and stamina up. It was the first time in years that she and Lillian had worked together on a project, and surprisingly, they were completely in sync. Lena hadn't slept, no one really had in the last 24 hours. They were all running on adrenaline and energy drinks. And it made flying to New York a nightmare. Finally, Kara had sat beside her on Cat's plane, tugged her across the plush seat she was nervously fidgeting in and had wrapped her arms around her securely. She hadn't slept, sleep was impossible, but being held by the Kryptonian had allowed her to relax enough that she could finally sit still and at least close her eyes. She had spent the next few hours listening to the steady beating of Kara's heart. It amazed her that Kara could be so calm.

The moment they arrived, Regina stepped away to answer Emma's

call. When she had returned her face was ashen, and even more grim. Her children surrounded her and Lena watched them find strength in each other before informing the group that Emma was running late. It couldn't be helped, REgina stated. She had learned something new and had to adjust. She couldn't tell them anything because it could jeopardize everything but she had wanted to reiterate she would be there. She was currently somewhere in Indiana, trying to convince another ragtag group of heroes to join the cause. Apparently whatever was going on there was connected to the Dark One's plans.

She hated sitting on the sidelines but between her two moms and Kara, she had been outnumbered. Regina had been the only one to be honest about why. The others insisted they needed her tech skills but Regina had reminded her of CSM's threat against her life. " You mother isn't going in either. We can't risk CSM getting his hands on you. Especially with your knowledge of alien DNA. We cannot afford to have Kara focused on protecting you. So stay put, help us from here." Raven had patted her arm, " hey, at least you are sidelined with the other nerds"

Lena had smiled at that and let Raven drag her to the observation van. Kara had interrupted Raven's explanation of their role and yanked the brunette into a hug so fierce it almost hurt. Lena had let herself be held by the trembling Kryptonian, and Lena knew, she would do anything to make this easier for Kara, even if it meant watching the action from a damned monitor rather than throwing punches by Kara's side. She was human, painfully so, and still recovering from her illness. She knew she was a liability to the group and she knew Kara was still terrified of losing her. So Lena hugged back just as fiercely and whispered in her ear, " don't do anything stupid Kara."

Kara had released a puff of air and a high pitched nervous giggle expression that adorable too innocent look, " me stupid?" she promptly tripped over her sisters foot as she backed up and Lena laughed at the sheepish grin on her face as she turned away. Lena glanced at Alex, " keep her safe Danvers"

Alex nodded seriously, " I will. Stay safe yourself Reyes"

Lena nodded and climbed into the van and found herself seated

between Winn and Raven. Monica and Lillian were crammed into the other surveillance van with Agent Mulder. Within moments, they were rolling out, dividing up into teams that would approach the building from different angles so as to not draw attention.

Lena swallowed as she watched the cams, listening to the silence over the coms. Everyone was nervous. They had every DEO and Cadmus Agent on their way to the site.

Now Lena sat on the side street. A few moments ago, the trucks full of agents, superheroes and witches had begun arriving, one by one, a few minutes apart. So far, nothing had happened and it was making everyone more and more tense. This was too easy. They had essentially walked into the building, and no one was in sight, no employees, no guests, no one. Lena guided them through carefully, growing more and more afraid by the minute.

Regina gave the order and Lena watched in fascination as the cloaking protection spell descended over the building. They could actually see it glimmering in the early morning light before the building shimmered and appeared normal. “Lena, keep us informed if anyone approaches the building. the spell should keep them from doing so, so if they do...”

“then they aren’t civilians, got it.”

“Raven, how are we looking?”

Raven glanced at the cams in the building, “first floor is still entirely clear, still having trouble with the second floors up. Looks like that’s likely where you guys will encounter trouble. You’re flying blind, I’m doing everything I can, but I’ve never seen firewalls like this before”

Lillian spoke into her mike, “this is where you want the heroes to lead, and Cadmus. Form a wall, push the magic users as far as possible”

“Yes ma’am” the cadmus captain stated, “we’ll go as far as we can.”

Lillian frowned, “everyone protect William at all costs. Our success hinges on getting him to that room. Do you understand? He’s by far

the most powerful individual here, but he can still bleed”

Lena watched everyone nod that they understood. Lena shuddered, she couldn't imagine what Dana was going through, watching her sixteen year old son walk into a war zone. Granted he was surrounded by Lexa's Trivoka Granplie, the entire Swan Mills family, DEO agents, and Cadmus super soldiers. There in the center, theoretically, he was as safe as one could get in such a situation. He had one job. Find the metal fragments and draw them to himself and destroy any dark ones they succeeded in paralyzing long enough for him to get close.

REgina had tried to get Emma to divulge more but the blonde had refused, simply telling everyone to trust her. (chapter ends with some alien races suddenly changing allegiance)

All together, there were over a thousand of them. The problem was they had no idea whether or not that would be near enough to take on the syndicate. Lena knew from the stories she had heard, one dark one could easily go through a force this size. But god she hoped that this would be enough. Raven tapped her shoulder, “ fous reyes. We can't afford to be distracted. They need us”

Lena nodded and flashed her a grateful smile and returned her gaze to the monitors, catching a glimpse if a figure moving about on the third floor, “ I've got movement on the third floor”

Raven's expression was grim, “ guys, we've got problems. The entire building is on lockdown. The stairwells are locked, the elevators are down....”

Oliver's deep tone filled the com, “ on it, “ come on supers, let's get these doors out of the way”

Lena watched Kara hit the door in front of her so hard it warped inwards, slamming into the concrete wall opposite, crushing two soldiers on the other side. Immediately gunfire opened. Lena tensed, there were super soldiers in every stairwell, trying to hold them back. She noted with a grin that the shields and armor everyone was wearing was causing severe burns on the super soldiers skin, bubbling and falling away like it was being eaten by acid. She

watched in horrified fascination as the metal structure underneath became visible, “ their literally sentient metal?”

Winn’s mouth was dropped open, “ I’ve never seen anything like this before” several super soldiers were down, never to stand again, but they weren’t alone. “ guys, stairwell, B. those aren’t super soldiers!”

They had already opened fire and LEna gasped, “ gas masks, now!”

Stairwell B was full of the green acid aliens, like the one who had imitated Emma during her rescue weeks ago” several DEO agents went down, clawing at their eyes as acid oozed from the wounds but the aliens kept advancing.

Winn shouted a warning to REgina, “ Dark one 9’ o clock” the figure under the hood advanced, gliding across the floor. Regina raised a shield with her daughters, shoving William behind her as Clarke and Ruby shifted, throwing themselves at the shadowy figure. It dissipated just before they made contact appearing suddenly behind them, but by then, Zelena had managed to get a hold of him, holding him still while William manipulated the only weapon he had brought, the metal fragment he had used to alleviate Lena’s symptoms. She watched the screen as he shaped it into a weapon, slamming it into the shadow with a yell. The metal glimmered and shone as the shadow shuddered violently. It collapsed, thethick black oil that oozed from his wound finding itself bound to the new weapon/ William shuddered as he drew the darkness into himself. Doubled over for a moment before the darkness exploded out from him, nothing but particle.

Each floor, things became more and more difficult, the Superheroes found themselves locked into a heated battle with super soldiers on the 10th floor, unable to advance. The Swan Mills and William were now on the 13th floor, completely surrounded by aliens. Lena tried to shout out warnings as often as possible, Lillian and Monica doing the same with their teams. It was too much, they were being completely overwhelmed on all sides and Lena itched to go in. Kara was tiring, finding it more and more difficult to keep up the pace with the increasing levels of kryptonite and lead in the walls. Oliver was holding his own and Barry was dashing every which way, trying to rescue people whenever someone found themselves trapped in a

death blow. The shape shifters were tiring as well, Ruby nursing a wound in her side, but still stubbornly standing beside the Swan Mills, growing at the growing horde of supersoldiers and green aliens.

It only occurred to her then that there was a surprising lack of dark ones fighting.

Lena glanced at the screen showing the outside and cursed. “shit, guys, we’ve got company”

Lillian apparently spotted the same thing, “Lena, get out of there. Now!”

CSM was calmly walking towards the van, Rumplestiltskin and a number of other dark ones beside him. “how did he get past the barrier spell? He shouldn’t have been able to do that!”

Monica’s voice screamed in her ear, “Lena, drive. Now” Lena froze. Winn was scrambling to the front of the van trying to get them out of there when Rumple casually waved his hand and ripped off the door. His magic found Lena and a chill went through her as she was surrounded in it, and pulled from the van to stand in front of him. CSM smirked and watched as Monica too was ripped from her van. She hung in the air beside her birth mother, unable to breathe as CSM blocked any air from entering her lungs with his magic. Her lungs burned from the lack of oxygen and her vision blurred. She was on the edge of consciousness and she knew this could very well be the end for her. Her heart ached as she thought about Kara inside, fighting, about all her new friends, her mothers who hug in the air beside her, faces ashen. “I had such big plans for you Lena Luthor. Such a bright mind, but your stupid friends had to interfere. Still, I can keep my second promise.” his eyes glittered with rage, “do you remember it Lena, what I promised you?” he nodded at Rumple and the man stepped forward with a sinister smirk, a fireball in his palm as CSM reminded her, “I promised you you would burn...”

Regina’s legs dropped out from under her, spots clouding her vision. She could taste copper in her mouth and felt her strength failing.

Zelena caught her sister easily, drawing her close as William leaned over her and healed her yet again. The young' boys face was full of concern and REgina again felt the pang of guilt for letting him come into this situation at all, even if he had saved her life several times. This was the fourth time REgina had nearly blacked out. The air was full of toxic gas. She could barely see for all the smoke. Glancing at her daughters as she stood once more everyone nodded grimly. They were all hanging on by a thread. There had been several close calls since the supersoliders surrounded the. Glancing around the room, eyes straining to see through the dense smoke REgina frowned, " where'd they go. There were still hundreds here a second ago

She heard Alex shout as she came towards them. The brunette hadn managed to sneak a group past the supersoldiers and had pushe dup to the floor where they had suspected the Dark Ones were hiding out, " they're not here. Your dark ones. The building is empty"

Regina frowned, " but we saw... " She pointe dat William, " he killed probalby a dozen of them"

Willaims hook his head, " that's a tiny fraction of how many were here. The ones we came across were weak. It was almost too easy to take them out"

Zelan shook her head, her eyes full of rage, " it was a distraction. CSM"

Alex cursed, " Lena. they want Lena. all this was a distraction to draw us away from her. He knew we wouldn't let her in here"

" Guys!" Kara's voice came through on the com crackling, " why are they falling back to the entrance?"

" Shit!" Alex cursed, her voice full of panic, " Kara. punch a hole through, we're coming. Thier after Lena"

Regina growled in frustration, " come one, we gotta get to Lena and monica, he'll kill them"

Everyone nodded and they chased down the super soldiers now fleeing for the entrance. growling in frustration at the exhaustion

threatening to take over Regina muttered, “ where the hell are you Emma?”

27. Turning of the Tide

Notes for the Chapter:

see end of chapter for list of who Emma called in (not all of them, couldn't write everyone in specifically, but I hinted at it at least. I may let you get to know more of them in the next few chapters, we shall see, but trust me they were there. this chapter was really freaking hard to write, especially with all the new additions. all of the characters i brought in are so badass and I hate that I couldn't give them the attention they deserved. if the battle feels hectic crazy and a bit hard to keep track of, that's because that's how battles are. lol. please excuse any typos. I cranked this out fast because I am trying to finish before my vacation. if all goes according to plan, two more chapters coming tomorrow.

Suddenly, Lena felt herself drop to the ground, coughing as air suddenly returned to her lungs. Her mothers arms wrapped around her, Monica and Lillian both breathing, “ you okay?”

She nodded and glanced up to see Emma Swan stepping between her and CSM, her hair up in the tight bun, her body covered in familiar black leather. She glanced at Lena and arched her brow, “ you alright?” Lena nodded, unable to say anything. Glancing behind her she saw a massive army of people, all different ages stepping around her and her mothers. They surrounded the three of them and the vans with Winn and the others. There were so many she couldn't even see past them.

“Emma” she whispered in awe. The blonde had kept her word. And when they needed her most, she was there.

“ Ah, Dark Swan, I wondered when you would show your face”

“ Rumpel, somehow I am not surprised to find you here. Brought some friends did you?” Lena shuddered at the odd tone Emma had

adopted. she worked her way to her feet, letting both her mother's bear most of her weight. She wasn't sure how they had managed to recover so quickly. She leaned against Monica and saw Emma motion the the massive assembly behind her, " I did too"

CSM laughed, " do you really think you can stop us? We've been planning this for years. We are too close to let you and your meddlesome family stop us now. Don't you remember the prophecy Swan? The fate of saviours is to die, and you... you have brought them all to us. You've made our job easier, played right into our hands."

" Is that so? Because all I see is a bunch of dark ones fleeing a fight they can't win and trying to steal back the advantage like the damn cowards they are" Ema's tone darkened her expression turning murderous, " Did you really think I would stand by and let you threaten my family?"

" family? She's a luthor. What's she to you?" he was pointing at Lillian.

Emma growled, " she's family. You have access to my memories Rumple. Check my record. What do I do to people who threaten the people I care about?"

the blonde beside her snickered, " hey that's my line swan"

Rumple paused, his face turning ashen, " you wouldn't dare, you're a hero. Heroes don't kill"

Emma's voice was deadly calm, "You willing to bet your life on that?"

Rumple and Emma stared each other down and he gave way first, " I'll deal with you later Swan"

Emma laughed cruelly, " That's right, flee back to storybrooke, I'll deal with you shortly"

He hesitated, startled by Emma's confidence before he vanished in a puff of smoke and Emma tilted her head, " Anyone else want to take the chance to flee. I have no problem hunting you down one by one. I

spent twenty four years doing it. What's twenty four more to me?"

The remaining dark ones stiffened and Emma chuckled darkly, " have it your way then."

Emma glanced at the few people who hadn't already charged into the fight in the building

" Eleven, Korra, their all yours, everyone else... my family could use some support. CSM is mine"

The massive group split, the majority heading rapidly for the building, disappearing behind the barrier. Lena stared at the girl and the young women who remained behind, and the burly sheriff standing just behind the youngest. The girl was literally vibrating with rage as she stared down a white haired man just behind CSM. Lena could have sworn she was muttering " papa" just under her breath. Swallowing, Lena glanced at the two brunettes on Emma's left. One had eyes that were glowing a blinding white. The girl beside her stood with a strange glove on her hand that crackled with raw electricity. Another blonde with wild curly hair stood beside Emma, holding a strange looking gun. Emma shook her head when one was offered to her, " River, kill whoever gets past me"

The blonde hesitated, " you sure? I could take out at least 6 before they reach you"

Emma smirked, " I'm sure. Fall back, stay between them and them." She gestured behind her to Lena and her mothers. The woman nodded and stepped backwards slowly, her weapon trained on the Dark Ones while inching closer to the tech team, " how bout you make my job easier and get behind cover?"

Monica nodded immediately, " got anymore toys like that one River?" Lena was surprised that her mother seemed to know who the blonde was.

River grinned as she swung the bag over her shoulder around, digging out more guns and handing them out, "point and shoot, it's sonic, so it'll do the rest"

Lena took the high tech gun Monica pressed into her hands.

River moved Lena's hand, " It usually goes better if you point it at the bad guys sweetie"

Lena glared at her but River laughed, " focus that rage at them and we might stand a chance"

Lena shook her head, confused by River's cavalier attitude about the danger they were in. she seemed to be enjoying herself as she pushed them all behind the vans, checked their surroundings.

No one moved for a long moment, and then all hell broke loose. Lillian and Monica tugged Lena away from the carnage as Emma and her friends moved faster than was humanly possible. CSM dodged Emma's magical attacks easily, trying to work his way around her to Lena. Lena and her mother's kept their guns trained, waiting for a clear shot. River didn't seem to have that problem, easily picking off dark ones one by one as they tried to get around the thin line Emma and her friends were holding. Within moments, Eleven was levitating off the ground screaming as she held off the remainder of the dark ones, Korra beside her spirit bending the descendents of Vaatu. Those who descended from purity continued to advance and Lena opened fire with a yell, her mother, dana, lillian, winn, and mulder beside her. For everyone they managed to hit, River took out three. She barked orders at them, shoving them out of harm's way more than once. She span quickly, multitasking as she picked off those closest to the group Emma had asked her to protect.

With every purity descendent that fell riddled with bullets made of the special iron compound, purity fled in its oil form, being drawn back towards the building. Glancing beyond the fight, Lena could see William walking towards them, covered like everyone else in dirt and blood.

Regina fought her way out of the building beside her family, half wondering if this wasn't her final fight. Her legs were trembling again, her vision fading. So when she spotted supersoldiers suddenly falling to an intense wave of magic from behind them, she thought

her eyes were playing tricks on her until Clarke whopped, Emma made it after all!”

Regina’s legs dropped out from under her but a group of young girls caught her. She stared in awe as Carmilla easily scooped her up in her arms and carried her away from the fight, “ easy. You are worn out.”

Laura handed her a bottle and Regina stared at her, “ emma wasn't kidding. You all are real?”

Laura chuckled, “ yeah, we are. And we heard you were fans. Emma said you guys were probably tuckered out” glancing around Regina realized that she was surrounded by magic users. William was resting against a wall watching the scene with a smile. Emma’s reinforcements had succeeded in taking out the last of the super soldiers, and the green ooze aliens had fled, realizing that the fight was one they were doomed to lose. Perry shoved another bottle into her hands, “ you need to drink that Mrs. Swan Mills. Emma could use some help outside and you and your girls won't be much use in your current condition”

“ What about Lena?”

Carmilla chuckled, “Relax, she’s fine. We got here in time. We would have been here earlier but Emma was insistent about the element of surprise.”

Ruby was watching the smaller brunette with a strange look, “ you a shifter?”

Carmilla frowned, and Laura helpfully supplied, “ she’s a giant black cat.” Regina watched with a fond smile as Carmilla’s lips quirked into a wry smile., “ yeah, I can shift”

After another moment, Regina felt her strength return and with a little help from Carmilla, she was standing again. Regina stared at Carmilla, startled at how much the small brunette looked like her. It was peculiar, seeing herself surrounded by all the various realms saviors, who in some small way all resembled either herself or Emma. Carmilla looked like her and it left her feeling uneasy. Carmilla

caught the queer look on her face and shrugged, “ it’s just as weird for us. Come on, the witches and your kids could use some back up”

Regina nodded and followed the group back to the front line, which was now the edge of the barrier. The super soldiers literally had their backs against the barrier, unable to flee any further and she watched as Emma’s army finished them off. Lexa’s face was streaked in dirt and blood, as she screamed at one soldier in a pure rage as she sliced him in two with a sword dipped in the iron compound. She moved gracefully, and with a speed Regina had never seen before. Clarke was beside her, firing off round after round. Just beyond them, Lily and Mal continued their assault from the sky, while Clarke and Ruby sifted once more to help redirect any trying to flee back to their deaths. Carmilla launched into the fray, her expression almost gleeful. Regina found herself fighting behind the souter once more and nodded when she introduced herself as the dragonborn. She had guessed at much when the woman’s voice had sent several green alien soldiers flying into the barrier where they disintegrated. Glancing to her left, she could see several entire families working together to pick off aliens with their magic.

Within moments, they had finished them off and many of them remained behind in the barrier to collect whatever fragments they could find. Alex nodded when Regina barked that she should clear the building. Kara had hesitated, “ But Lena” Regina sighed, “ come on Danvers. She’s safe, but come see for yourself”

Stepping through the barrier after the last one fell Regina breathed a sigh of relief the moment she laid eyes on her true love before promptly swallowing in fear. This was not the Emma Swan she knew. This was Trivoka Wuskripa, the monster in the shadows lashing out with a ferocity Regina had never seen before. Emma looked more like a dark one than any of the hundred or so dark ones still standing. Emma wasn’t alone. Beside her were two young girls both equally terrifying. Regina could easily identify the magic coming from both. These were two of the prophesied saviours descended from their line. The both were dark haired brunettes levitating off the ground, the air around them crackling with energy as they directed every ounce of power at the dark ones before them. They were falling rapidly, and now, they found themselves boxed in. Several dark ones vanished in

plumes of smoke upon realizing that the tables had turned. They were sandwiched between two lines of saviours. Beyond them, she caught a glimpse of Monica and Lena hiding with the rest of the techs, firing their odd looking guns at the dark ones they could hit without fear. One wild haired blonde stood out and she watched with a shake of her head as the blonde paused to smile at her for a moment before resuming her task. The woman was fierce, firing far more rapidly than anyone else on the field. Idly, Regina wondered if the woman wasn't showing off. Hearing a yell she ducked as dark one blasted magic at her. Once again, the dragonborn saved her, using her voice to redirect the energy right back at the man who sent it. He dropped into a hot pile of ash. "Pay attention" the woman warned her with a laugh, "all it takes is one moment, and the next thing you know, you're bitching about taking an arrow to the knee for the rest of your life"

Regina rolled her eyes at the woman's back as she headed back into the fray. Regina wondered if Emma hadn't told her to stick close to Regina because anytime she came close to fielding a blow, the woman was there. She seemed to be enjoying herself as much as the blonde behind Emma. Regina shook her head, wondering at how Emma managed to find so many lunatics to fight with her, then again, she was in love with the damned woman, so she supposed she couldn't really judge.

Regina had no idea who most of the people around her were. She knew they were witches, entire families and covens of witches, with both light and dark magic. Given the way the air around them seemed to literally vibrate with energy, Regina had no doubt they were the most powerful witches in their respective realms. Everything about their magic felt familiar, and with many of them, she could feel the thread of magic that bound them to her family. Not everyone here were saviors, but most were, and certainly the strongest of them were. Some were human, others were not. They were joined by vampires, lycans, hybrids.

Regina felt herself gently pushed aside by the dragonborn who flashed her an apologetic glance before shouting something so loudly that the ground beneath their feet shuddered. Regina felt the strange magic settle itself over her and just in time since a Dark One

tried to land a blow that would have killed her if it hadn't been for the heavily armored Dragonborn dashing in front of her, her body absorbing the blow without any damage. The woman gave her a wolfish grin before blasting the soldier with electricity so strong it reduced him to a pile of ashes. She shuddered as the woman barreled towards the dark ones, her shorter dark haired vampire companion casting spells beside her. Glancing around she spotted another piece of the metal compound laying in the ash pile the woman had left in her wake. Regina handed it off to William who grinned tiredly. She could sense his power growing with each piece they recovered, and it had a tangible effect on the people around him. She noticed that rather than feeling more fatigued the longer this battle dragged on, she actually felt stronger, more energized. They had found dozens of such pieces, and Regina had no doubt that once this battle was over, they would find countless more. She wondered if they weren't responsible for her returned strength, even more than the potions she had drank again minutes before

Slowly, the number of Dark one's dwindled until only CSM remained. As the numbers dwindled, it became clear that if William wasn't close enough when they fell, the darkness fled the hosts just before death. Those who descended from Vaatu vanished in a puff of smoke, those descended from Purity seemed drawn directly into CSM himself.

The last one fell and CSM glanced around himself to realize he was surrounded by saviours and for the first time, he looked afraid. For every dark one descended from purity that fell, his power had grown, but so had the saviors. Regina knew, even with all the additional power of the purity dark ones being siphoned directly to him, he didn't stand a chance against everyone now focused on him. He knew it too and with one last threat, he vanished, his words hanging over the ash covered street, "This isn't over"

Clarke stared at the hundreds of people milling the street and searching the building. She felt Lexa sidle up beside her and take her hand with a sigh, "It's over, for now. Alex just declared the building cleared."

Clarke sighed heavily. "How's Lena?"

“ recovering. She’s been through the grinder today.”

Clarke shuddered, Lena had come very close to dying again today, as had many of them. If it hadn't been for their positions so close to William, they all likely would have died very early on in the battle. Many of the DEO's finest and all of Cadmus's super soldiers had died. Barry had been blasted off of a wall and was nursing broken ribs. Oliver was passed out from exhaustion, Felicity fussing over him as they loaded him into a van to take back to the DEO.

Kara was furious and had spent the better part of an hour raging at Emma for being late. Lena had calmed her down with gentle words and assurance that she was fine. For Emma's part, the blonde was silent. She, along with Eleven and Korra had exhausted themselves in battle. Emma couldn't get her legs to work, and Regina wasn't much better. Korra was leaning heavily on Asami and Eleven had been scooped up by her adopted father as soon as CSM had fled.

No one felt victorious, the battle had lasted all day leaned against Clarke as she watched the sun set over the waterway. Raven sat down beside her, her face streaked in dirt. Lena offered her a hand and surprisingly, Raven took it with a grim smile, offering Winn her free one. They all sat in silence, watching those who were lucky enough to still have some energy left help the wounded, cover the dead and dig through the rubble to find the metal pieces William needed. Dana was still beside her son,

“ mom called Henry. Rumple, Gideon and CSM are all there. The DEO is gonna be left with this, we have to go home.”

Clarke nodded tiredly, “ this isn't over yet. Please tell me all Emma's back up is coming with us?”

Lexa nodded, “ yeah. She says we need to get back to the DEO, then fly straight to Storybrooke. She has something she needs to tell us but won't do it until we are in the air on our way to Storybrooke. According to her, Henry and my army probably have their hands full right about now.”

“ god damn. When is this family gonna catch a break?” Clarke wasn't sure how much more she could take. They had barely survived today.

She wasn't relishing another fight against three incredibly strong dark ones

“ I honestly don't know” Lexa stated softly before helping Clarke to her feet and leading her towards the van ready to take them back to the DEO, and onward, to the next battle

Notes for the Chapter:

Emma's army:

Allanon, Wil and Eretrei- shannara

Barry Allen- the Flash

Oliver and Felicity- the Arrow

Korra and Asami- Legend of Korra

Laura, Laf, Kirsh, Mattie, Mel, Carmilla and Perry-
Carmilla “ the scooby gang”

DragonBorn (Aaliyah Wolfe) and Serana- Skyrim

Beauchamp family- witches of East End

Bonnie Bennett- Vampire diaries

Duchanness family- beautiful creatures

Eleven(Jane/El) and Chief Hopper- Stranger things

French Quarter Coven- the originals

River Song- Doctor Who

and many many more...

28. Vaatu and Purity

Notes for the Chapter:

This chapter is dense, so read slowly. I may or may not have to squeeze in another chapter, making the final fight another two parts. we shall see how it goes. anyhow. that's all for tonight. more is coming tomorrow, since I am staunchly pretending that Christmas doesn't exist.
please excuse any typos. i'm tired. lol

Zelena and Abby found themselves sitting towards the back of the very crowded plane and Zelena froze momentarily when Abby's palm slid into hers. After a moment she allowed her hold to tighten and relaxed, leaning into the other woman with a heavy sigh. Abby didn't say anything, she just watched the last of their massive group board and seat themselves. Most of Emma's army were going to be flown in on a passenger airliner, leaving the ever growing swan mills family, Eleven, chief Hopper, Aaliyah Wolfe, Serana, Korra and Asami with Cat Grants jet. It was cramped but no one seemed to mind. William was busy, healing everyone he could of their injuries from battle while Cat grants staff handed out potions to the magic users. Zelena's own magic was damn near spent as well. It wasn't because she had been foolish enough to push herself past her limits either. No. Most of Zelena's time in the building had been catching her idiot sister who couldn't seem to help herself and kept constantly pushing until she couldn't stand anymore. She had watched Regina nearly die from blows she should have been able to easily block, pass out from exertion and generally make a nuisance of herself. Zelena huffed in irritation again. Abby chuckled lowly and rubbed circles into the back of her hand, "relax. You would have done the same"

" no, I wouldn't have. When is she going to get hta tall this self sacrifice bullshit isn't cute?"

Abby shrugged, " from what I know of the mills sisters, you both are damned stubborn, especially when your family is in danger and you feel like you have something to prove"

“ how is getting yourself killed a good way to prove anything?”

“ beats the hell out of me, but then again, I was busy making sure you did not die while you made sure she didn't.”

Zelena glared at her for a moment but Abby arched her brow and Zelena sighed, her anger dissipating immediately, “ I’m sorry I worried you”

Abby shrugged, “War is like that. I’m glad I was there and not stuck back in storybrooke. At least by your side, by Clarke’s and... by our family I felt like I could do something.” Abby glanced at Regina who leaned heavily on Emma and appeared to be asleep, “ I imagine REGina is the same. Think about it. This had to feel frighteningly familiar to her and Emma, fighting to save her family, fighting off an enemy they knew little about.”

Zelena nodded. She glanced at her nieces and saw them leaned into each other, Clarke beside Lexa, Winn by Raven. They were all leaned into each other, exhaustion lining their faces. Even so, Raven and Winn were talking quietly, working on their devices. Lena sat just past them, sandwiched between her two mothers who fussed over her. Kara sat opposite them, her head on Alex’s shoulder, sound asleep. Everyone was fading quickly, and over the fight already. The excitement of sparring had morphed into tension as they prepared for battle, to the sinking dread and exhaustion of winning a battle but not the war. Live had been lost, many like Kara had blood on their hands for the first time. Others, like herself, her sister and Emma, simply had more faces to add to the cast that starred in their dreams when they were lucky enough to sleep. Zelena met Emma’s tired gaze across the plane and she arched a brow at the blonde, wondering when Emma planned to brief them. Emma shook her head, careful not to disturb the brunette against her, “sleep” she mouthed and Zelena caved. They all needed it, and it was a long flight to storybrooke. They had time to discuss plans later. Relaxing back into the seat, she let her eyes flutter closed, almost smiling as Abby leaned against her heavily, sighing when she finally was comfortable. Sleep was slow to come, so Zelena wasn’t sure exactly when her thoughts faded to silence. She wondered just before everything faded away if the potions she had been given had contained ingredients for sleep since she had not thought she would feel this drowsy before another

fight.

William watched his friends sleep and sighed with relief. They needed the precious time to rest. They weren't like him. They were human. Well, aside from the vampires and shifters aboard. He glanced at the Dragonborn who watched him with sharp eyes, mouth twitching in amusement. She didn't seem tired at all and he supposed that didn't surprise him given the fact that battles were a part of her day to day life. She was strong, built like a warrior, eyes piercing and glowing with vampirism. Serana beside her was silent, eyes closed but tense. It was clear neither of them were going to sleep at all, and he wasn't sure he blamed them. Aaliyah had to be puzzled by the large metal bird hurtling through the air faster than any dragon she had ever ridden. Turning away from her sharp gaze he watched the effects of his energy work on everyone else in the cabin, at least, on those who didn't have either the magic of shifters or aliens running through their blood. Lena was awake, barely so, as the alien dna in her was weak at best, just enough to grant her immunity from the spartan virus, but also enough to keep his attempts to aid her rest at bay. Dana and Monica were still stubbornly awake too. Both seemed resistant to the idea of falling asleep and losing sight of their children for even a moment. Sighing he seated himself beside the savior and she gave him a weak smile, " I know you added magic to help them sleep, thank you"

He nodded with a frown, " why aren't you asleep?"

Emma shrugged, " I likely won't sleep til this is over"

" the visions?" he asked softly. Emma hesitated before nodding, " It's constant. Everyone is okay for now. But they are up to something, and they are trying like hell to find a way into my head and find out what I know."

" you are strong Emma, resist them"

She nodded tiredly, " I am, but that means no sleep. I can't give them an opening."

He shook his head, “ they can’t. He nodded to Eleven, “ she’s shielding everyone on the plane and keeping tabs”

Emma frowned, “ I cant shoulder this all onto a couple of kids. It’s not right”

“ you don't have a choice Emma. you aren’t the dark one anymore. You are exhausted from battle, and transporting all over the multiverse. Sleep. Let us protect you the way you have us. It's only a few hours. We can manage. You need the rest. You are of no use to anyone dead on your feet”

Emma glanced at twelve year old Eleven and the girl nodded seriously, her voice filling Emma’s mind, sleep. Trust us

Are you sure? Emma asked. Elle managed a small smile, this is nothing compared to holding off an army of dark ones.

Emma sighed and felt both William and Elle using their energy to force Emma to relax. She glared at them for a moment, but it lacked any real heat. She needed the rest and she knew it. William tossed Eleven a grateful look once Emma finally slipped into unconsciousness. He sat back against his seat, offering his hand to his redhead mother, she too had been resisting sleep, but found herself losing the battle as William wielded the energy within him, sending calming energy into his mother, and watched her relax. Pretty soon, he and Elle were the only ones still awake, even the Dragonborn and Serana giving into their exhaustion. He sighed and let his own eyes close for a few moments. He didn't need sleep, not like the others. He, like Elle was always in a state of consciousness, even when he did manage to sleep. He didn't really need it, not anymore. Usually about thirty minutes of meditation gave him the same refreshing effect as a whole night of sleep for most humans. Glancing at Elle once more she nodded. She would take first watch and let him meditate to recharge. Then he would take over. Once they were both rested, they would wake the others, and Emma would brief them all.

Three hours later, Emma watched Raven and Winn finish setting up the comm connection to the planes behind them. There were four in

total, three passenger airliners full of Emma's army, the remaining DEO agents, heroes, shifters, storybrooke residents and LEXA's grounders. Raven patched her into their intercom systems so she could brief everyone at once. Everyone on the passenger airliners was asked to remain quiet during the briefing and any questions would be fielded by the appointed leaders aboard each of the airliners.

Once rAven gave her the thumbs up, Emma cleared her throat.

" Hello everyone. I know it's been a rough few weeks, and I want to thank each and every one of you who have offered your services to deal with this threat. You have all sacrificed a great deal, and many of us lost friends today. So first, I would like to take a moment and honor the fallen with silence."

For a long minute, Emma let the static of the comm fill the air as everyone bowed their heads and reflected on the fallen. All together they had lost just over fifty DEO agents, and Lillian had lost all 75 of her Super Soldiers, many of them friends and allies. So Emma wasn't surprised by the tears sliding down Lillian's cheeks. Alex and Kara cried too for those they had lost.

Emma finally cleared her throat, trying to stamp down the emotions rising in her like a wave.

" okay, so as many of you know, while I was out recruiting help, I discovered a bit more of what the Dark Ones are up to. I learned there is not one, but two lines of dark ones, each evolved from something much older. The darkness and the black oil, or purity are two branches of the same evolutionary tree. And it doesn't matter what realm you are from, if you are here, you have experienced some variation of one of these two beings. These two were created by the ancient ones, and now, it's left to us to destroy them. Thing is, they are at war with each other as well. They want the power and the evolutionary changes of the other. But more than anything, both want to stop being dependent on hosts for their survival. That's their goal. To gain enough power to create a permanent physical form in which they can still use their metaphysical abilities."

Emma handed the mike off to Korra who introduced herself quickly before picking up where Emma left off, " the one many of you are

familiar with is the descendents of Vaatu. That's where the Dark ones of the enchanted forest and related realms evolved from. Vaatu is an ancient enemy of mine, and originated in my realm. Rava, his counterpart was also a creation of the ancient ones, in an attempt to undo their mistake. Problem was, rava was never given the means to permanently destroy Vaatu. She could fight him and beat him. When she did he was forced to endure a ten thousand year banishment. Rava soon joined with a human, creating the first avatar, a reincarnating being designed to host rAva while she fought Vaatu. I am one such incarnation. Not long ago, I banished him again. I thought he was gone, but I never thought to ask where. little did I know he went to the upside down."

Korra handed off the mike to Eleven, and her soft voice filled the cabin as she calmly explained her experience with Vaatu " the upside down is the realm that is opposite this realm. Well, every realm really. Vaatu cannot truly exist outside of it. It's his host. Think of it in terms of dimensions.the first dimension is where he was created, where his evolution and purity's started. The Upside down is a lower vibration, lower dimension, and there, Vaatu cannot maintain a physical form, our dimension where it can use a physical form as a host, and the higher dimensions, where it can take on its own permanent physical form. Everytime the avatar/ravaged defeat vaatu, has to start over. But instead, this time it evolved to send out bits of itself, creating dark ones from the dark fog, where it multiplies/reproduces. The shadowy monster made entirely of dark fog trapped in the upside down is vaatu, the first and strongest of the fog dark ones. Purity is its competition The Black Oil. They are 2 Similar evolutionary Tracks Both wanting The power of the other and both evolutionary Trees

Our dimension,the one that holds every single universe we have ever heard of, is above that. Vaatu and Purity fought their way out of the upside down to our dimension where they use living beings as hosts, giving them a way to take physical form. The problem is they cannot take a host without eventually killing it, forcing it to find new hosts"

She handed the mike back to Emma who nodded at her gratefully. She had asked them to help her explain everything because it was too much for even her to wrap her mind around fully. She sighed and

continued to explain, “ what Vaatu and Purity want, is to achieve what it is rumored the ancient ones achieved. They want to accumulate enough power, contained in pieces of an ancient wall created by the ancients to create their own physical form, they want to experience evolution like the rest of us. they want to become third dimensional beings while maintaining the abilities of multidimensional beings. That’s why each of you were chosen to help us fight them. If you are a shifter, possess any type of magic, have multiple types of DNA, you are a multidimensional being. You experience reality through a third dimensional lense but can use multidimensional energy to affect the world around you and your physical form. Purity and Vaatu fear us. They’ve tried over and over again to destroy us. We were created by the ancients to destroy their mistake, the darkness. That is what this war is all about. That’s what the prophecies about saviours are all about, what the prophecy about my family is all about. It’s about the war between our kind, and theirs. That’s been the syndicates ultimate goal, to try and shape and force evolution to include them, to fight and claw their way above us in the evolutionary tree. They’ve been using the pieces of the wall to do it, and destroying every saviour they could get their hands on, because they knew, if we united like we have today, they don’t stand a chance”

“ then where are the ancient ones? Why aren’t they doing this. Why are we doing the bidding of beings place and manipulated our lives to get their way?” Aaliyah asked, frowning. Emma raised her hand and raised a brow at the dragonborn. Aaliyah despised being a puppet, and bucked against authority she didn’t see as legitimate, against leaders who subjugated those around them. She didn’t believe in the gods of her realm, and made a point in using the daedra to obtain their weapons and relics without ever truly giving away her allegiance. she had the blood of dragons, of werewolves, vampires and other blood lines, and she identified with none. She prided herself on being self made, and everything about what Emma shared bucked in the face of her independent identity. Emma understood her concern and shared it, “ I know, and I agree. But from what I can tell, they fled. The Darkness Is a formidable being. It evolved far beyond what they expected. They took the wall apart piece by piece, concealed it across the realms and took the most crucial pieces with them to a much higher dimension. Its why all of us, in the third dimension,

across all of our realms, share many of the same stories of both gods/heroes and the darkness. It's why the darkness has spread to every realm in existence. Seeking what they left behind, trying to find the clue that leads them to the next level, that gives them the power to take on their creators."

William spoke up softly, " It wants to become one evolutionary track again, one ultimate being. So not only is there a war of dark ones vs ancient ones trying to undo their creation, but a war amongst dark ones trying to further their own evolution at the expense of the others. It's natural selection at an unprecedented rate."

Emma nodded, " and it turns out... Hook learned all of this shortly after becoming the dark one. I had spent all of my time up till the point where I used the darkness to save him fighting it, so it had revealed nothing of it's plans to me. Even then, after I embraced it, it always hid that part of itself off from me. William was the one who helped me realize I preyed upon the darkness, not the other way around. It fears me, and my daughter exa and worked tirelessly to keep its plans from us. It's why Hook targeted saviours from our line, because it had discovered that I would not only inhibit its ability to evolve, but my line is designed to stop it"

" what are you saying Emma, Hook can't remember any of this..." Regina's tone was puzzled, but Emma knew from one glance in her direction, the brunette was catching on quickly.

Emma sighed, " Apparently, Hook discovered that Rumple had used dream catchers to steal his memories of his time as the dark one. Hook... has always had his own darkness, and he raved the power he had as the dark one. A few months ago, just after Hook was sent back from the underworld Rumple called me into his shop, apparently someone had broken in but nothing was stolen as far he could tell. At the time, it made no sense, but I've recently discovered that Hook was behind that break in, and he found the dreamcatchers, stealing back his memories. This plan... everything that's happened with the dark ones, hyde's arrival, it was all a distraction created by Rumple to buy him time to ather the dark ones of various realms and while he set things in motion. Hook, was suspicious and once he recovered his memories, began shaping his own plan. His relationship with me, was his attempt to stay close, to learn what i knew of his plans as the

dark one. Thing is, I never did know why he was after our descendents. But now..."

"Wait? Didn't zeus send Hook back.. Do you think he could be...?"

Emma frowned, "An ancient one? No. a much older dark one? Potentially. At this point, it wouldn't really surprise me"

Everyone was shell shocked and Emma gave them a minute to absorb everything. Her daughter was first to speak, "So why run back to storybrooke?"

Emma shrugged, "Magic. You've noticed the extreme strain it causes us to use magic outside of storybrooke Lexa. it effects them the same way. They need an advantage because they are going to destroy each other. Thing is, Gold walked right into a trap. He thought he killed Gideon and stole his power. Instead, Gideon fooled him, tried to steal the dream catchers and Hook's memories, unaware Hook had already done so. Hook killed him with a dark one dagger, stealing Gideons power"

Regina's mouth dropped open, "are you telling me your eyeliner ex is a dark one again?"

Emma nodded tiredly, "Would seem so"

"So.... Rumple..." Raven asked, looking like she already suspected the answer

"Is dead. Hook killed him as soon as he arrived in storybrooke. It's just CSM, descended from Purity, and Hook, descended from Vaatu." Emma glanced at Elle, "This morning, he opened a gate in storybrooke. He's going to let Vaatu through. He is going to let Vaatu use him as a host. He intends to take on CSM and all of storybrooke is going to be caught in the middle of a war between two of the most powerful beings ever to exist. Yeah, its bad"

Zelena released a high pitched laugh, "bad? Dearie, that's the understatement of a lifetime. If i'm following this correctly, all of the darkness of both evolutionary branches is in storybrooke, with our children, our families, everyone trapped in the middle. It's going to

be a bloodbath”

Emma nodded “ hence why I brought so much help. Look, I am not going to sugarcoat this. We have never faced anything like this before. But I brought the most powerful magic wielders I could find. I brought literally everyone I could find in their current lifetimes.”

Regina glared at her true love, “ you knew this before the battle? Why didn't you tell us?”

“ I couldn't Gina. I have the foresight afforded to me by the darkness I 'm still connected to it. It can't see what I know, but the second I tell you, it knows. Do you understand. The second William or Elle drop their guard, it will know we know. It likely already knows we are coming. It knows we are going to fight like hell to end this thing. You need to understand... I didn't have a choice. I knew you were walking into a trap this morning, yes, but the only way to get to you in time to save you was to let you walk into that trap.”

“ don't be angry with her.” Emma recognized Allanon's deep voice through the speaker, “ she did what she must. You cannot understand the burden of foresight, and I hope you never do. She made the only choice she could, and had she not, far more lives would have been lost.”

Regina sighed and Lexa placed a calming hand on her brunette mothers arm as she gazed at her blonde mother with sympathy in her eyes. Emma fought back the tears of exhaustion and frustration. Yes she knew what Hook was up to, and no there wasn't a damned thing she could do about it because until he had reconnected himself to the darkness, she hadn't been able to see it. Her foresight was a direct result of her connection to Vaatu and his descendants. Oddly enough, Lexa and the natblida were descendents of Purity. Lexa hadn't been able to see what Emma saw, but she had sensed CSM's plans. It was the only advantage they had, this foresight, but with it came impossible choices that had to be made.

Emma felt Regina's magic thrum through her veins and felt the apologetic gaze directed at her. She nodded to the brunette and sighed, “ look. We are going into a warzone. More people are going to die. But we don't have a choice. This fight was left for us. We don't

have the ancient ones. What we do have, is our strength together. We have Eleven, who has contained Vaatu before, Korra who had banished him. We have Allan who helped banish demons possessed by purity back to hell. We have William, who was created to destroy both. We can do this, if we work together, if we trust each other. We are all connected in this. In this fight we are all family, and we must fight as a family if we stand a prayer's chance at survival"

" So what's the plan?" Kara asked. Lena beside her nodded, watching Emma carefully, " we need to find them. I need my techies on that" they all nodded immediately.

" Lena, Lillian, we need a way to contain the gate. It's a portal to the upside down, and the area around it is toxic, lethal to living things. Think of it as this plane is matter, that plane is antimatter, consuming everything living. We need to contain it, and everything Vaatu will send in ahead of him, monsters included" Lena swallowed and glanced at her adopted mother who nodded firmly, "Consider it done"

" Shifters, the unsavory task of fighting whatever comes through falls to you. Dragons, Aaliyah, , anyone who excels in wielding fire, burn the shit out of whatever comes through. Fire seems to be an effective way to hurt Vaatu, water is too."

They nodded firmly.

Emma continued, " magic users, shield the shit out of the town, minimize damage, heal etc. soldiers, round everyone up, get them to safe locations. I don't want citizens on the streets. Wherever the gate is, get everyone as far as you can within town limits in the opposite direction."

Emma heard the orders distributed on the other aircraft and sighed, " and saviours, you are with me. This fight is ours and ours alone. Everyone else is to stay the hell back and follow orders, understood?"

Emma glared at those on the plane frowning at that order, " we need everyone to do their part if we are going to survive this, clear?"

Silence fell over the aircraft as they processed their orders, a few moments later, the seatbelt lights came on and everyone tensed. Regina's hand found Emma's and squeezed. The blonde leaned into Regina, letting her magic invade Emma's senses. She could sense the fear all around them but oddly Emma felt nothing but calm. She knew all hell was about to break loose in storybrooke, but Emma agreed with Cat grant. She couldn't think of a single person more capable than every member of their small army. Somehow, they would defeat their enemy. She just hoped that they wouldn't lose anyone else in the process.

Notes for the Chapter:

what do you guys think about how I have connected Fate falls to the events of brave enough? particularly hook's part in all this mess?

29. The Battle for Storybrooke

Notes for the Chapter:

This is part one of two for the battle in storybrooke. part two should be up later this evening. please excuse any typos, I went through this a few times, but probably missed a few.

Henry couldn't help but let out a sigh of relief when the first jet crossed the Storybrooke barrier without issue. He had spent a good part of the night modifying the barrier spell with his author's abilities to make coming through the barrier safer for everyone behind Cat Grant's jet. Her plane touched down and Henry watched as the newly minted sheriff's deputies guided the pilot down the road to the makeshift hanger where everyone could debark while allowing room for the passenger airliners. Henry had had grounders and arkadians clearing trees on both sides of the road in and out of town since his family left the first time, sensing they may need the area cleared for aircraft. Henry glanced at his watch as he heard the high pitched whine of another plane coming in. He watched with concern and trepidation as it shuddered its way through the barrier. He grimaced. He had hoped to make it smooth flying in but as he watched the barrier spell bounce the plane violently as it passed through, he swallowed and counted his lucky stars that at least the plane made it through in one piece.

Seconds later, the plane taxied down their makeshift runway, headed for the hanger. Henry sighed and waited another few minutes. He continued barking orders at the deputies, frequently tossing nervous glances around him. He had the entire area cleared of everyone but Lexa's army and the deputies. David stood beside him, giving terse orders to his new recruits, while Henry was in charge of ensuring the security of the landing sight. Since the gate opened that morning, they hadn't spotted any activity from the dark ones, but he was still nervous. The two natblida behind him were antsy, sensing the great power lurking in the shadows. Their nightblood enabled them to sense the presence of three powerful dark ones as late as this morning, but that had quickly dropped to two. Ontari's eyes were

sharp, scanning the treeline for the first hint of a threat. Henry counted himself lucky to have both her and Aiden by his side. They were fierce warriors, and their loyalty to his family and to him was unmatched by anyone in Storybrooke.

He met Ontari's gaze and she shook her head, " nothing yet". He nodded as the last plane shuddered through. The plane bounced as it landed and he grimaced at the sparks underneath the wheels as it hit the ground a little too fast. Henry frowned and glanced at Aiden, remind me to discuss building a proper airport with my mother's once this is over"

Aiden smiled and nodded, " sha."

Henry took his pen and book from Aiden and carefully undid the modifications he had made to the barrier. He would have to speak with his mothers anyway to make getting everyone back home safer. Finally, Henry snapped the book shut and began jogging down the runway towards his family.

He saw his brunette mother glance up and catch sight of him as her feet hit the blacktop and she gave him one of her patented smiles. Still, as he approached, he could see the exhaustion in her eyes, the way her shoulders sagged, and the almost casual way Emma was holding her close, so as to not advertise that Regina could barely stand. He frowned, but forgot to admonish his brunette mother for pushing herself too hard yet again when her arms wrapped around him.

For the first time in weeks, Henry wasn't Prince Henry, Fleimkepa, saviour and author. He was Henry, the son of Regina and Emma. His mother's arms around him lessened the burden he had been carrying since their first departure. They were home. For better or worse, this fight would no longer be on his shoulders alone. His family was back and he couldn't be more relieved.

He didn't realize he was crying until Emma wrapped her arms around them both, " You did well Hen. I am so incredibly proud of you.'

"We both are." Regina sounded as choked up as he was and he nodded against her shoulder as his siblings suddenly joined the group

hug, Lexa's voice in his ear "you did well Henry. You have restored honor to the title of fleimkepa, as I knew you would". The high praise from his sister made him smile in spite of himself and he felt his shoulders square at the compliment.

He had done the best he could but he hadn't been alone, " Ontari and Aiden did well, I would not have been able to do this without them." His mothers released him as he addressed Lexa and she nodded firmly, the hint of a smile tugging at her lips.

He smirked, Lexa was in full on Heda mode " I will be sure to pass along my gratitude to them as well then. Where are they?"

" I told them to stay with gramps. Your army is on all sides, but it couldn't hurt to have a few extra keeping an eye on him as well."

Lexa hid her amusement well but he could see the glint of laughter in her eyes, " very well, I should find them. I have much to discuss with the natblida"

Henry nodded sharply, feeling the sense of responsibility return as the heaviness of the moment reminded him why his family was finally home.

He watched Lexa head for their grandfather. Getting on the radio, Henry's tone took on a commanding note, " Octavia?"

She responded instantly, " sha fleimkepa?"

" you still with the natblida?"

He could hear the amusement in her tone, " sha, as instructed..."

He glanced at the stiffness in Lexa's back as she jogged away, " bring them to hanger one please. Heda needs a word"

" how soon?"

"Now."

Octavia signed off without a word and Henry turned to his mother's again. Emma immediately took charge, " Henry, were you able to get

a location on the gate? I need to get the team over there to contain it. The air around it is extremely toxic.”

Henry nodded the natblida helped us pinpoint it. It's the well”

Regina's face went white, “ the gate is in the well?”

Henry nodded, “ my guess? Hook thought he was being ironic, creating the gate where Rumple brought magic in from”

He watched his mothers process this and Emma nodded, “ so you already figured out Hook was involved, how?”

He did a shoddy job disguising Gideon's body. It may have looked like Hook but it didn't smell like him” Henry wrinkled his nose before continuing, “besides, the natblida sensed the transfer of power when Hook took it. Between that and the dreamcatchers, it wasn't hard to guess who was behind the whole thing”

Emma nodded, a hint of pride in her gaze, “ Great job Hen. you'd make a good detective.” He shrugged and turned when he heard his name called. Octavia was jogging towards him a group of young kids he knew fairly well by now right behind. Bellamy and his crew followed closely weapons at the ready, expressions grim.

“Henry, they said something is happening.” he glanced at the faces of the young natblida in his care and frowned. They all looked anxious. Glancing beyond them, Lexa was headed down the runway at a dead run, Ontari and Aiden on her heels, “ Emma, the gate!”

Henry's radio squawked to life, it was Elsa, and she sounded afraid“ Prince Henry, I'm pulling my troops back. Something is climbing out of the well. It's... well frankly, it looks like another monster”

“Shit!” Henry turned to his moms, panic in his expression. Emma's jaw ticked, and she started barking orders, “ shifters, and witches, with, me , now. Lillian, Lena, get your gear, we have to get this contained. She turned to Henry, “ Tell me your put up some kind of barricade”

He nodded grimly, “ its a glass bubble, reinforced, with a tall electrified fence round it. Still, if it's anything like what broke

through earlier this morning, it won't hold long, we lost Sneezy and Doc to it this morning before we managed to put it down."

Emma yelled, "Eleven!"

Henry stared at the young girl who bolted towards Emma as soon as she heard her name, and Henry stared in shock at the maturity in the girls eyes, " it's the demogorgon?" she asked. Henry frowned, " from dungeons and dragons?"

She shook her head, " no, it's a monster, that's just what me and my friends called it."

Henry nodded, he dug out his phone and showed her a picture of the strange creature, " its head.... Opened up like a fly trap. It looked like a flower. Is this your demogorgon?"

. He had never seen such a terrifying look on a girl's face before. " how many did it kill?"

Henry swallowed. The image of his grandmothers friends been torn apart by the thing would haunt him forever, he was sure, "two"

Her eyes narrowed dangerously, her jaw twitched and her entire demeanor stiffened and darkened, " Emma, there are hundreds of those in the upside down. He's going to send them in ahead of him to clear the way. You need to get me to the gate now"

Emma nodded, "Henry, stay here with your mother"

Regina started to argue but Emma glared at her, " you are in no condition to fight right now. Don't even think about arguing. *Stay. Here.* protect the town, get everyone who can't fight as far away from the gate as possible."

Henry gasped, " the arena. We should take them there. It's the safest place."

Regina nodded, her expression furious. He knew she hated being sidelined but seeing as Emma had just transferred his mothers weight to him before taking off for the planes, yelling orders ahead of her, he knew Emma was right. Regina could barely stand, let alone fight. He

barked into his radio, “ change of plans. Everyone who is armed or is capable of fighting, follow Knight Swan and Heda. Everyone who cannot, fall back to the arena. This is a code red. Keep the radio clear unless encountering resistance.”

Silence fell over the radio and he focused on getting his mother to a vehicle. He was grateful he had the foresight to bring the school buses to the makeshift hangers, as now he was directing everyone aboard them.

A few moments later, Henry peeled out of the parking lot, leading a line of buses towards the arena he had created. This wasn't exactly what he had in mind for introducing his mother to it for the first time, but at least she would see how secure the place was. At least, he certainly hoped so. He glanced behind him and watched the rest of his family hightail it in the opposite direction and felt the anxiety build in his gut.

Monica and Dana sat in the back seat of Lena and Lillian's car, William between them. No one spoke as they followed the line of cars towards the gate. Monica watched the twitching in Lillian's jaw. She looked calm, but Monica could see the storm in her eyes as she frequently glanced in the rear view mirror. “William, are you sure you can beat this thing?”

Dana tensed but William nodded, “ Emma's right, with all the aid we have, we can. I just need an opening.”

“ You have all the pieces you need?”

“ I will need to get ahold of Hook's dagger, excalibur and CSM's pieces. The rest I have.”

“ Is it all of it, enough to put the wall back together?”

Dana stiffened further, “ Why? You planning on stealing them for yourself?”

From her position in the back seat, Monica could see the fear in Lillian's eyes and answered for her, “ She's afraid we are walking

William into a trap. She wants to be sure, if they do manage to beat us, to take the pieces from William, that they won't have enough to achieve their goal" the fact that if they actually managed to do that meant complete failure and the death of everyone they loved went unsaid, but hung heavily over the car.

Lillian flashed her a grateful look before addressing Dana's fears, "Look, I understand your distrust of me. But William's safety is every bit the priority for me as my own daughter's. I know CSM, probably better than you do. And I'm telling you, as bad as you think he is, he's worse, especially with the more power he gains. And I think we have all seen enough of the people we care about dying to last a lifetime."

Dana relaxed slowly and William squeezed her hand, "If she meant me harm mom, I would know. She cannot keep any secrets from me"

Dana nodded and Monica breathed a sigh of relief. Lena had been silent through the whole exchange, and Monica reached up and touched her shoulder gently, and smiled when Lena reached up and squeezed her hand in thanks.

Lena's radio suddenly squawked and everyone shuddered at the high pitched scream that came through, "fall back. Thier through the glass!"

Henry's voice ordered calm, "do not fire until they get past the fence. Do you hear me? Hold your fire. Save your ammunition and energy. They will impale themselves on that fence. It's a distraction. Everyone sound off." the first two squads gave their reports but the third didn't respond.

Henry's voice grew tense as he repeated his request, "Squad three, come in"

Silence. Everyone tensed, and Henry's voice came on again, his tone deceptively calm, "squad three come in"

Emma broke in, "Henry, where was Squad three positioned?"

"north side of the gate"

Everyone tensed, they were approaching the north side now.

Emma barked into the radio, “Everyone in caravan stay alert. You spot anything, report it. Squad four report”

“ nothing here. Its dead quiet.”

Everyone else surrounding the gate sounded off. The only activity so far was the horde occasionally slamming into the fence, and the apparent silence from squad three. Squad three was Arkadians, reassigned from protection detail to hold the line until they could get there. According to all the other squads, the monsters weren’t really trying to break through, and were largely avoiding direct contact with the fence.

Lena’s voice was hard, thick with trepidation, “ it's a distraction”

Monica froze as something huge and black came flying out of the woods and slammed into the vehicle in front of them. Lillian swerved, narrowly avoiding a second creature as Lena slammed down the radio controller, “ We’ve got contact. Their coming out of the woods to the left of the caravan”

“Weapons free” Emma barked and suddenly, dragons swooped from the sky, pouring fire on the increasing number of assailants. Lillian’s foot hit the gas as she expertly handled the car, avoiding creature after creature. Lena screamed as one came out of nowhere, slamming itself into their car, nearly flipping it. Lillian cursed and Monica as it flew through the air. Monica tried to contain her fear as she began to smell blood, and realized they all had cuts from the shattered glass. Two more creatures bounded towards them and slammed full force into the vehicle.

Dana whimpered, “ William...”

The boy nodded and closed his eyes, taking control of the car with his mind. Lillian took the opportunity to dig out a gun River Song had given her earlier and began firing out the now shattered windows, Dana and Monica did the same. William maneuvered them through the caravan, and they fired shot after shot watching monster after monster drop to either fire raining down from the sky or a hail

of bullets. They're car wasn't the only one being remotely controlled. Eleven was doing the same in Emma's car.

Hearing and feeling a massive thud above her, Monica glanced up as claws pierced the metal roof of the car and she shuddered as it barely missed her head, "Duck!" she screamed. The creature peeled back the metal roofing and screeched at them, blood dripping from its flowered head into the car. Monica was frozen with terror as the creature reared back to attack before suddenly going flying through the air when a massive furry body collided with it.

Monica watched in fascinated horror as Abby in her massive leopard form tore the monster to shreds with her teeth, before turning to check on them. Lillian nodded at her and William ordered them from the car, "we have to go on foot from here, theres no way through". They clambered out and stared in horror. The entire caravan was under attack. There were hundreds of monsters attacking from all sides. They were doing their best to hold their own, but the shifters and witches were the only ones having much luck. Bullets only seemed to enrage the creatures. Clarke swooped down low in her dragon form teeth flashing as she caught another monster leaping at them in mid air, crushing it in her massive talons. Behind her she heard a snarl and turned to find a giant panther ducking her head, her eyes trying to communicate something. Another massive creature was beside her, part werewolf, part bear. It stood on its massive legs and gestured with its claws that they should continue into the woods,towards the gate.

Monica nodded and turned when she heard Emma yell her name, "there's more coming, come on, we have to get William and Eleven to the gate.they are the only ones who can close it!" Monica hated leaving the carnage behind her, but they had no choice. She had to help get her friends to the gate. Forward was the only choice, even as she heard screams behind her. she raised her gun grimly and continued the charge into the woods

Everyone was at a dead run and Monica did her best to stay near Dana and Lena. River Song came out of nowhere, guns blazing in both hands, firing laser blasts that blasted the hell out of monsters

unluckily enough to be in the vicinity “ would you hurry up?!” before shouting a warning, “ behind you!” everyone whirled around to see CSM calmly approaching them, a group of super soldiers behind him. They seemed to be able to tear through the monsters with relative ease, and Monica shuddered.

Shoving Dana and Lena in front of her she yelled, “ Run!”

River song fell behind, trying to by them precious time. From the look of things when Monica glanced over her shoulder, for the time being at least, the blonde was succeeding. The super soldiers were having a hard time pressing forward, as one gun was now firing bullets made of the iron compound. If Monica had the time, she would have wondered how her guns seemed to switched effortlessly between the types of ammo. Either way, nothing was going to get past her anytime soon.

They all charged towards the gate, and Monica glanced behind to notice CSM’s expression hadn’t changed. In his mind,he had all the time in the world. He didn't seem put off by River’s assault and the monsters couldn't get close to him with the protection of his super soldiers. Finally, leaving River alone, Monica darted after the group ahead of her.

The stench of death and rot grew stronger as they drew nearer to the gate. Monica shuddered as she recognized Arkadians and grounders among the dead, recognizing Bellamy among the wounded, hanging on to life by a thread. His chest was torn wide open, his eyes glazed over, and he was muttering something unintelligible over and over again. Lexa, and her trivoka granplei found their group a moment later and caught where Monica was gazing. Swallowing, Lexa drew a sword from the sheath on her back and approached the young man.

Monica stood there frozen, sensing what Lexa was going to do, but unable to tear her eyes away. Lexa knelt beside Bellamy and spoke to him softly for a moment before he nodded, his expression pleading. Lexa pulled him into a seated position and held him there as she slid her blade through him. He movement was so smooth and graceful, slow and methodical, Monica knew it was intended to quicken his end, put him out of his misery without adding to his pain. It was a remarkably gentle gesture andHe groaned as she released him as

gently as she could, and she muttered, “Yu gonplei ste odon, Bellamy kom Skaikru.” He went still and she closed his eyes and stood after a moment staring at the young man’s body, and the brunette whispered, “ your debt is paid in full skaiskat”

Lexa rejoined them after a moment and Emma placed a hand on her daughters shoulder in comfort. Lexa had no love for the boy, but killing one of Clarke’s friends affecting just as profoundly as killing one of her own, even if it was a mercy. Monica had heard the story of how two of Clarke’s friends had orchestrated massacres of Lexa’s people, and now, both were dead. Lexa nodded and they pressed on. The battle was more sporadic now, since many of the creatures had left the gate and branched out, hunting down anyone they found. They still had to fight off the ones feasting on the dead, but largely, the shifters handled that, allowing them to press on. The dragons couldn’t do much here, but she could still hear them above them, as they tried to slow down the progress of the super soldiers.

They stepped into a clearing cautiously and Emma stiffened, her posture going ramrod straight as they spotted the lone figure standing in front of the well, arms thrown open, body locked in a trembling fit. Darkness pouring out of the gate, directly into the cloaked figure and Emma snarled, “ Hook”

He couldn't hear her, but everyone else did. The group behind them grew as they were joined by Emma’s army, magic users, shifters, and everyone in between. Eleven stepped up beside William and they both glanced at Emma. She nodded, “ cut off his connection to Vaatu, then do as we planned. Lena, Lillian, set up a perimeter as best you can. Magic users, assist. Shifters, cover our six.

Aaliyah growled at that, clearly wanting a chance at hook but Emma shook her head firmly, “ Hook is mine. I am going to end this for once and for all, like I should have all those years ago. CSM will be here in minutes. *Watch our six*”

Aaliya nodded sharply, indicating she understood. A wolfish grin appeared as she recalled who was on their six and Emma nodded, “ that’s right. CSM’s all yours.”

Aaliyah loped back in the direction they had come, Ruby, Carmilla,

Abby and the other shifters followed. The witch covens were right behind them.

Emma glanced around, “ where’s Korra?”

The girl came out of the woods to their left, looking at Eleven and William “ here, ready to go into the upside down whenever you are” more familiar faces emerged from the woods and Emma relaxed. More people had survived than she had dared hope. She hoped that remained true.

They both nodded and Emma took a deep steadying breath, “ Allanon, Will, Eretrei?” They all nodded sharply, “ we will keep them safe”

Allanon gave Emma a sharp look, “ Do not lose yourself in this fight Swan. you have come too far to cave to the darkness now. You are stronger than it, stronger than all of us, do not let it deceive you and draw you in with its empty promises”

Emma nodded, “ I won’t.” She glanced at Zelena who nodded at her firmly “ you got this dearie, I’ve got your back”

“ Is everyone?”

“ Everyone else is safe. Henry got them to the arena and its under full lockdown. Raven and winn are managing operations from there the supers are there too, keeping everyone safe. ”

Emma nodded. Monica stepped up and placed a hand on her friend's arm, “ Emma...”

Emma shook her head,” Keep william and Dana safe. I’ll be fine”

Monica gave her a look and Emma sighed, “ trust me” Monica swallowed and did as asked.

With one final look at everyone to be clear they understood their part. Emma cracked her neck and drew up her magic, "now for the fun part” before throwing all of her magic, both light and dark directly at Hook’s back.

30. A Good Death

Notes for the Chapter:

warning: plot twist. expect to have conflicted feels.
lol.

Lexa had never seen the look on Emma's face that she saw now. Emma Swan was a trembling mass of pure rage, and she was a sight to behold, as every ounce of magic in her veins hit Hook solidly in the back, severing his connection to Vaatu, and throwing Hook clear across the clearing. Emma glanced at Lexa and nodded, "go!"

Lexa moved fluidly, charging forward during those precious seconds, guiding her friends to the well where Vaatu was now billowing out. Lexa watched Eleven stop dead in her tracks, her expression taking on that same fearsome look Emma had as her hands shot out in front of her and she screamed as Vaatu tried once more to get past her. But this time she wasn't alone, and it made all the difference. William stepped up beside her, drawing out the hunk of metal he had been collecting and shaping since the battle in New York. With a smirk, he used the sword of prometheus that Emma had handed over that morning to shape it into a suit of armor that left him gleaming in the light created by Emma's magic. A sword appeared in his hands and he seemed to grow taller, his muscles defined as he took his place beside Eleven. The girl continued her assault and Vaatu roared in rage as he realized that the metal he sought was in front of him, being wielded against him. The smoke that was Vaatu was diminishing in strength and with one last shudder, it withdrew back into the upside down. Glancing at Lexa, Eleven nodded, "now we follow him, and end this"

The sounds of fighting came from behind them and Lexa turned to see that CSM had arrived, right on time. He charged towards them and Lexa barked, "go!"

Her team charged into the well, and she followed suit swiftly, sending her own magic at CSM. It hit him square in the chest, light and dark, pure energy and knocked him back, buying her time to fall into the upside down. He didn't follow but that hardly surprised Lexa.

She knew his game. He was biding his time, waiting for them to weaken both Hook and Vaatu enough so that he could steal their power for himself, without having to do much. Korra Asami, Allanon, Will and Eretria landed beside her in the upside down. Swiftly donning their gas masks, they glanced around them. In the distance, they could see Vaatu looming over the upside down version of storybrooke. Lexa gasped, “ he’s headed for the arena”

“ he won't get there. We won't let him.” Eretria was determined. Lexa nodded, “ let’s move. William and Elevel nodded and they set off quickly, following the fleeing monster.

Emma stood opposite Hook, waiting for an opening. She could sense CSM lurking in the shadows and took a deep breath. “ all these years, I wondered why. Why you would seek out my descendents, why you were determined to destroy everything. Now I get it.”

Hook shook his head, “ this has nothing to do with you Emma, don’t make it personal”

“ personal? You went after my family! You kidnapped my daughters, let another dark one steal Raven’s heart. You orchestrated Lexa becoming Heda, all so you could see if they were like me, if they could wield the darkness as I could. And when you realized my line was a threat, you hunted them down and tried to slaughter them. I spent twenty four years away from my family chasing you around doing damage control. How the hell am I not supposed to take it personally?”

Hook shook his head, “ the crocodile took everything from me. For several hundred years Emma, all I wanted was to see him pay, to rip from him what he ripped from me, and to find a way to take back what he stole. Did you really think you could dissuade me from that?”

“ you played me for a fool”

“ No emma. You are wrong. I loved you. I love you still. Everything I did then, everything I am doing now is because I love you” his tone

softened, his eyes pleading with her to understand, “ You changed me. You showed me I could be more. At first I hated you for making me the dark one. It wasn’t until I was separated from it that I realized what a gift you had given me. A chance to get it all, to destroy rumple once and for all, go back, and save Milah. You taught me love is the most important thing, family. She was my family Emma, Milah, Baelfire... you were too”

Emma shook her head, Hook was earnest. He genuinely believed what he was saying. She wasn’t sure how much of this was the darkness, and how much of this was the man underneath, but it didn't matter. He was delusional and his madness had cost lives.

Emma was vibrating with rage, “ If I am your family...why take my children from me? Why do what Rumpel did to you. How do you justify any of this?”

“ because I can undo it all. Don't you get it? Don't you see? I m so close to having the power to redefine reality, to redefine the rules. I will choose who lives and who dies.Once I hold the power of Vaatu, of Purity, of Excalibur and it’s siblings, I can restore all that has been lost. I can give you Neal back!”

“Neal is dead Killian. He’s not coming back. And he wouldn’t want this. If you loved him, if you loved me, please. Stop this”

Hook growled in frustration before yelling at her suddenly, his voice alight with panic, before he vanished “Emma, Duck!” Emma stared at the space where Hook had been a moment before in shock before hearing a blade singing through the air behind her. Whipping around, she gasped. CSM had managed to sneak up behind her, and had attempted to stab her, but Killian stopped the blade with his hook as he shoved her out of harm's way. Emma watched in confusion as CSM and Hook began to fight, blades singing through the air, metal scraping against metal. Hook couldn't do much aside from try to stay between CSM and Emma, but his expression was dark and furious.

“ a little help here swan!” he yelled over his shoulder and Emma hesitated, not sure she should interfere, before he yelled again, “Love, please”

Something in his tone reminded her of their last conversation, before she had vanished through a mirror with Regina. It seemed so long ago now...

she looked at Killian, tears in her eyes and wept, " I am so sorry Killian. I destroyed you. I dragged you into this and I..." he didn't let her finish.

He swept her into his arms, tugging her head against his solid chest, " Oh Emma, I loved you, I still love you. I would do it over again for you, but we are not meant to be anymore than Regina and Robin were"

She pulled back and glared at him, " she loved him, they were soulmates!"

He chuckled at how quickly Emma jumped to her defense, " Emma, so are we. But soulmates and true loves are two very different things. That is why your heart couldn't save me... your heart can only be paired with one other, your twin flame, your True Love. And we both know, I am no more your True Love, than Robin was Regina's. I have seen how she looks at you, and how you look at her. I have seen your magic together. You two... you two are meant to be. You balance each other out. As much as it pains me to say this, she is exactly what you need. I am not. I am trying... I am trying to do right by you, by letting you go... Its not you who is not enough love, its me... I can never be enough for you, not when your heart is meant for Regina, and it was wrong of me, selfish of me to even try."

Tears slid down Emma's cheeks and he brushed them away gently, " I will always be here for you, I am your soulmate after all, but I will be your friend, nothing more. I will protect you, stand by you, do whatever you need, look after your boy... be your best man..."

Her eyes shot to his and he smirked, "you will eventually marry her, right?"

She shook her head, trying to contain her trembling, " I can't believe I am standing here talking about this with you... and you are so calm about it, you aren't angry, or making accusations, or wanting to lock her up..."

He actually laughed, " We came to an understanding concerning you a while ago, that we both cared for you, and that we wouldn't stand in each other's way, that we would both be what you need from us. That is why I

left today Swan. I realized I am standing in the way... and I can't do that anymore... she needs you just as much as you need her. Her heart is broken over Robin, and you are the only one capable of putting her back together again, figuratively and literally"

Something about that phrase catches her attention and she cocks her head at him and he smiles, "as much as Regina and I dislike each other, we are much alike. I understand why she took the serum. She has never truly been able to deal with her own darkness. It has always haunted her, no matter how she denies it. She has yet to come to terms with the two warring sides of herself Swan. She needs someone to show her that everyone is a bit of both. You showed me, you helped me come to terms with my past, without excusing it, you did it by loving me, all of me and accepting all of me. You love all of her too, but she has yet to realize that. You need to help her realize that, and help her reintegrate with the queen. It's the only way".

Emma stared at Hook battling CSM and murmured, "you fucking idiot". It finally made sense. Hook had become the dark one again in the vain attempt to protect her and her family.

In his mind, he was embracing his dark self, not realizing that he was different from Regina. She had come to terms with that part of herself, and could control her darkness. Hook was a raging alcoholic, darkness was like alcohol for him, an addiction he couldn't shake. But right now, his original intentions were still true. Selfish idiot that he was, he was still trying to protect her. All the hell he put her through with disrupting realm after realm, trying to expose her descendants, none of that was him trying to actually kill them. He was about as effective at it as Regina had been in killing Snow, yet Emma had been too busy dealing with the latest disaster to see what he was actually doing. He was preparing her for this. He was trying to communicate the darkness's plan, Rumpel and CSM's plan, trying to show her exactly what she needed to counter it.

He did what Emma had briefly considered doing herself before realizing how stupid that would be. He took the darkness back, thinking he could beat it. Emma shuddered when she realized how close she had come to making the same mistake when she learned Lena had been taken. She had considered taking CSM's darkness, thinking she could control it like before. But Hook wasn't carrying

the darkness of One dark One, but the Darkness of every dark one descended from Vaatu. The idiot had taken it all on, and it was overwhelming him. The only reason he had control at the moment was because of his determination to protect his soul mate. Growling in frustration, she cursed him out again and threw her magic at CSM, “ I’m going to fucking kill you when this is over Killian!”

he simply stated in a calm that had her worried, “ I’m counting on it”

Emma paused and he growled at her again, “swan, focus. You can be pissed at me later. CSM cannot enter the upside down. It has to be me.”

Emma nodded and rejoined the fight, throwing herself into the battle. CSM tried to escape but suddenly, Regina was there, her brown eyes furious. She threw her own mixed magic at CSM and yelled at Emma, “ you swore we do this together”

“ not now ‘Gina!” Emma barked and hook seconded her, “ just help us kill the bastard and you can kick swan’s ass later”

Regina looked ready to murder Hook but a shake of Emma’s head made her pause and follow their instructions instead. Emma sensed Regina’s confusion but Emma was able to establish a connection with the brunette, “ *trust me*”

Regina’s body language hardened but her eyes softened as she nodded once. Emma, Hook and Regina kept pushing CSM further and further from the well, their magic overwhelming the man. He tried one last time to swipe his blade at Hook, desperate for Hook’s power but Hook managed to grab the mans hand and force it into CSM’s gut instead. Hook shuddered and gasped as the black oil was forced from CSM and traveled into Hook. “get back” he growled and Emma grabbed Regina, ripping her away from the man.

“ Emma, we have to kill him, now!”

Emma shook her head firmly, “trust me. It’s not what you think”

“ what the actual fuck Emma? How many times does he have to nearly destroy use before you open your eyes and see?”

Emma glared at Regina, her tone taking on an edge that made Regina flinch. She had never used that tone on Regina before, “ *Trust. Me.*”

Regina stared at her, her brown eyes searching Emma’s for a long moment, “ I hope you know what you are doing”

“ I do. More importantly, I know what he’s doing, and I am going to help him see it through. There’s no other choice.”

Killians pained voice spoke softly behind them, “swan”

Emma turned and shot a glare at him, “ you are a god damned fool Killian. You know that?”

He managed a weak grin, “ yeah, I do. But I don't see another way. And I knew it was going to be you or me, and there's no way in hell I was going to let it be you”

“What’s he talking about?” Regina sounded afraid and Emma tugged her close, “ It’s him. The darkness has to all be in one vessel, in one place in order for William to destroy it. The darknesses greatest strength, its greatest chance for evolution is also when its most vulnerable. We need to get Hook in the upside down. I have to take him to Vaatu and let him finish what he started”

“ Emma....”

“ I know what you are thinking Regina, and I won't let that happen. Killian’s still in there. He just saved my life. I need you to stay here. I know you hate being left behind but I need you to trust me.”

Tears filled Regina’s eyes, “swear to me you are coming back.”

Emma nodded, “ ai swega yu in.” Regina tugged her into an insistent kiss while Hook turned away.

After a moment he groaned, “swan, we are running out of time.”

She pulled out of Regina’s grasp, and nodded at Hook. He was doubled over, darkness swirling in his eyes, his body growing weaker as he fought to contain the massive amounts of power coursing through his veins.

Emma gently shoved Regina away from the gate, “go, there’s wounded who need help. I’ve got this. And I will bring everyone home.”

Regina hesitated before nodding. She turned and looked at Hook for a long moment, and he nodded weakly, “ I will see this through your majesty. I’m going to do what I was sent back to do.”

That gave both women pause but Regina nodded and strode away, leaving Emma with hook.

Emma led the way to the well and reached out to steady hook, “ dont touch me swan” his voice was low in warning, “ it's taking all my strength to keep it inside me. It wants out. Don't make me lose control”

Emma nodded and stepped back, letting Hook pass through first.

As soon as she landed, Lexa was by her side, positioning herself between Emma and Hook “nomoun, what the hell is going on?”

Emma brushed herself off and stood, “ we have to let Vaatu have Hook. The darkness has to be in one vessel before it can all be destroyed.”

“ that would explain why Korra, William and Eleven are having such a hard time, we’ve been driven back several times. Their exhausted. And we have wounded.

Emma felt the panic rise in her chest and Lexa steadied her, “ not severe, but we need to finish this and get everyone out of here. This air is toxic as all hell.”

Emma nodded, finding it difficult to breathe. She hurried over to the ragtag group with a frown, Dana and Monica were both bleeding from head wounds, Asami’s shoulder was out of socket. Allanon was unconscious, Will’s hands were badly burned and Eretria was clutching her right arm to her chest.

Emma glanced at Lexa, “get them out of here. All i need now is Korra, William and Eleven. Everyone else, get out of here. This place is about to come down around us in a few minutes, and I can’t get

this many people out in time”

Lexa frowned, “nomoun”

Emma’s voiced hardened, “Leksa kom trikru, do as you are told”

Lexa stared at her mother, her teacher, her defender and protector. She nodded and began ushering everyone towards the well, “ let's go, quickly now”

Emma turned back to hook who was watching Vaatu approach rapidly, “ well, here goes nothing” he tried to sound nonchalant, but Emma could hear the hint of fear in his voice. “ promise me Emma, that this will work. I need to know my death is going to mean something.”

William answered for her, “ it will work.”

Killian nodded and seemed to find his strength, “If I try to hurt anyone else...”

“I’ll kill you myself” William promised.

Killian nodded and turned to Emma, “I’m sorry. For everything. I know I was a shit boyfriend and an even worse soulmate. I know I lied to you, manipulated you, and made poor decisions that nearly cost you everything several times. But I hope that I can make up for that now, be the man in death that I never was in life.”

it sounded so much like Regina’s plea during the trigger, just before neverland that she started to cry. “ ah, swan, stop that, don’t waste your tears on me. This is why I was sent back, this is my unfinished business, my part to play.”

Emma nodded and wiped away her tears, and followed the man towards Vaatu, who screamed and launched himself at Hook. Hook glanced back once more, that cocky smirk on his face and he winked before yelling at Vaatu, “ come on then you bloody terror. Let's finish this!”

Vaatu hesitated, clearly sensing the trap laid out for him, but unable to resist the raw power oozing from hook’s pores. He latched on and

began pouring his own darkness into Hook, and Hook opened his mouth in a silent scream. Eleven, William, Korra and Emma took up their positions, using their respective abilities to prevent Vaatu from fleeing. They poured their energy into the dark void as Vaatu fled into his new vessel. By the time Vaatu realized his host was already dying, he was already contained in Hook's body. The darkness fought harder than ever before because no human, dark one or not could hold so much power within themselves and live, but it was too late.

Korra, Eleven and Emma forced the darkness to remain trapped in Killian's body, and then William was there, his sword plunged into Hook's chest, drawing all of the darkness out of Hook's wound and into himself. William shuddered violently, far more than he had ever done with the other dark ones he took on. Eleven lended him her aid and Korra spirit bended him, aiding him in forcing the darkness to enter a host genetically created to destroy it. William was toxic to the darkness, every single cell in his body was designed to kill it. Emma watched as the upside down began to crumble into nothingness, the destruction of the anti-realm rapidly approaching them as William threw back his head and screamed. The darkness expelled from him in a shockwave, reduced to nothing but ah before the boy crumpled to the ground ,unconscious.

Emma scooped him up and turned around, "get to the well. Now!" there was no time to grab Hook's body, and it was too late for him anyway. The second William plunged the sword he forged with the metal and the flame of prometheus, Killian had died.

The world around them continued to shake violently. It felt like a living creature in its death throes and Emma supposed it was. This whole realm, was Vaatu. It was the darkness, and without its hosts, it could not longer sustain itself. Emma ran as fast as she could. She had no magic left to force them through the portal. They had to flee on foot. Emma tossed William through, helped Eleven over the ledge, then watched Korra leap down it as well. Emma glanced behind her the world disintegrating around her and jumped into the well, seconds before the gate vanished completely.

The last thing Emma remembered was slamming into the ground and her world going black.

Notes for the Chapter:

hmmm. did anyone see that twist coming? I honestly toyed with making Emma a Dark One again, but realized with the lore and the direction of the story that was a REALLY bad idea. so... I used Hook instead. It was the only reason I could think of to explain why Hook was sent back, and why he would do everything he did in this story and in cannon. hopefully it makes sense

any who, only a few chapters left now... it's all downhill (in the positive direction) from here. next chapter, William makes good on his word, people recover... funerals for the fallen.

oh, I broke my previous word count record guys. Brave Enough was my biggest story, now this one has it beat, and its all thanks to you guys!

I think this will be my last chapter for tonight. hopefully the last three chapters will be up tomorrow, the 27th at the latest. I have vowed that my upcoming trip to Florida in a few days will be a vacation from technology as well, and I want this done before the end of the year... hence the fast and furious pace this week. lol.

31. Everybody Lives

Notes for the Chapter:

so much fluff. a few remaining plot points are explained.

“She’s not breathing!” Regina leaned over her true love’s limp body, trying to find a pulse. After a minute of Lexa inspecting her mother’s prone form Emma groaned, “cuz I got the wind knocked out of me ‘gina, and I’m pretty sure I’ve got one hell of a concussion”

“ how do you know?” Lexa asked, probing her mother’s head gently. Emma grimaced, “Ouch. because I’m pretty sure I did that astral projection thing when I hit the ground...”

Monica whipped around from checking on Dana, “ you left your body?”

“Pretty sure I did, yeah. I was suddenly above myself for a minute. I went right back in, it’s like my body didn’t want me feeling the impact”

Raven started laughing, “ sorry ma, not funny I know, but you actually managed to hit your head so hard that you knocked your spirit from your body?”

“ yep” Emma smirked and Regina realized that the blonde idiot was proud of that fact before she promptly turned over out of Regina’s arms and vomited. Emma groaned, “ I think I broke a couple of ribs”

Everyone backed up grossed out as Emma continued spilling her guts and Regina hovered over her, fighting back tears, “ let’s get her to the hospital”

Emma wiped her mouth and argued,“ oh hell no. you are not letting Dr. Whale put his slimy hands all over me, take me home and Dr. Griffin can look at me”

“ I hardly think you are in a position to be giving me orders Miss Swan”

“Really ‘gina, the miss swan thing is getting old.” Emma laid back and met Regina’s worried gaze, “ hey, I know you are scared. But it’s over, okay? The darkness is dead, the upside down has been completely destroyed, and my spirit is right back where it belongs, in here” she pointed to her chest, “ I’m not going anywhere, I just REALLY want to go home, and cuddle up with my woman. Okay?”

Regina snorted in spite of herself, “ you must have hit your head harder than I thought, Emma Swan, wanting to cuddle?”

Emma tried to grin, but failed, her expression falling, and regina felt her fear rise at the pained expression on Emma’s face as she whispered “ hey, sooner rather than later please, I’m starting to feel it”

Regina nodded to her daughter and carefully they scooped Emma up into their arms and poofed her back to Regina’s house. Emma promptly threw up all over them, muttering an apology.

Regina didn’t say a word about it, just carefully laid Emma in the tub and handed her a bucket before leaving to change clothes, barking at raven to keep her talking. Moments later, she came back and found rAven poking Emma repeatedly, grinning at her brunette mother, she sounds drunk”

“ she has a severe concussion dear. Did she blackout at all?”

Raven shook her head, “ nope, just kept saying stuff in some strange language. I think she was thought I was you, because it sounded a bit... flirty”

Regina blushed, “ Emma, were you just flirting with our daughter?”

Emma groaned in response, “thought she was you..” and Regina shook her head, torn between amusement at concussion Emma and worry over the obvious danger Emma was in. sighing, she carefully undressed and cleaned Emma with cool water.

Lexa returned a few minutes later when Regina called her softly and

carefully, they pulled Emma out, dressed her and carried her to bed, where Abby was waiting and immediately took over. “ Emma was right, she’s got one hell of a concussion. It’s a miracle she woke up.” She examined Emma’s torso, “ and two.. Three broken ribs on her left side. I’m going to have to bind them into place until William can heal them. I think trying to set them will do more harm than good. I don’t want to cause any internal bleeding.” Regina sat behind Emma and held her up while Abby carefully wrapped Emma’s chest, rubbing circles into her back as Emma cursed in pain.

Abby tsked at the blonde but Emma tiredly arched a brow at her before settling with, “ thanks doc.”

Abby nodded, “ feeling so bad you cant even come up with a sarcastic witty response Emma?”

Emma shrugged and winced. Abby patted her in sympathy, “ William will be by later, he’s healing the more life threatening injuries, and the cancer right now”

Regina nodded, “Thank you Abby”

Abby grinned, “ anything for family, right? Keep her in bed. Don’t let her sleep more than an hour at a time until I come back with William. Once he heals her, I’ll check again and determine if its alright to sleep the rest off.” Abby left, presumably to check on other injuries.

Regina went to sit on the chaise she had pulled closer to her bed, but Emma whined, “ stay with me ‘gina”

Regina arched brow at her but complied. She spent the rest of the evening by Emma’s side, waking her every hour, making her do memory exercises to ensure she wasn’t getting worse. Henry, Lexa, and Raven took turns sitting with them before hurrying off to help elsewhere. Henry around ten, came in and promptly fell asleep on the chaise. Regina watched him in amusement, he had his blonde mothers gift for sleeping anywhere. Glancing back down at Emma she checked her pulse for the upteenth time. Emma’s breathing was so shallow, that Regina needed the additional reassurance that Emma was still alive. Emma hadn’t thrown up again since her bath, a fact

Regina was grateful for, but seeing Emma this still reminded her of the smell of blood, and seeing Emma ravaged by bullets not too long ago. She was really going to invest in a bubble for the blonde. Her kids too now that she thought about it. She wasn't sure her heart could handle anymore near death experiences with any of her family members.

It was midnight before William finally arrived, exhaustion in his young face” how’s she doing?”

“ her pain and nausea comes and goes, but she hasn’t thrown up. Her memory seems to be okay but her breathing is too shallow, and it's getting harder to wake her up.”

William frowned as he approached, “ May I?” he gestured to Emma and Regina nodded.

The boy was wearing gauntlets shaped from the metal fragments they had collected. The strange lettering on the gauntlets glowed and shimmered as he gently placed his hands one Emma, one on her bandaged head, one on her bound ribs. He closed his eyes and focused, and Regina saw Emma’s breathing start to deepen at the contact. After a moment, her eyes fluttered open and she frowned, “ ‘gina?” her voice was clear for the first time since her fall and Regina breathed a sigh of relief, “ yes love, I’m right here. William is healing you. Relax, okay. Let him do what he needs to”

Emma glanced at the boy standing over her,” thanks Will.”

He winked at her, “ I made you a promise.”

Emma grinned at him, “ that you did” she grew serious, “ I’m glad you are safe how are you?”

He glanced at her for a moment before sighing, “ you mean, how am I handling the fact that I killed someone today?”

Emma nodded against his hand on her head and he withdrew after a moment with a sigh, “ all done”

“ William” her tone was firm and he glanced at her “ I’m... dealing. I killed people in National City too remember? They were dark ones,

like Hook, but when I took their darkness, I killed them”

“ they were already dying, you know that”

“ yes, but in the end, it wasn't the darkness that snuffed out their light. It was me”

Emma nodded, carefully working her way into a seated position, “ yes, it was you. And you saved far more lives than you took William”

“ is that what you tell yourself?”

Emma flinched and he continued, “ does it help?”

Emma shook her head, “ no. it doesn't. What helps is my family. Being around the people I love, and reminding myself that I did what I had to to protect the people I love. I won't sugar coat it for you will, it sucks. You will have nightmares. You will dealing with crushing guilt and shame. But you are not alone. This is not a burden you ever have to bear alone”

“ I bear it so you don't have to” he stated calmly, his eyes full of grief. He had never looked older than he did in that moment.

Regina shook her head, understanding the sentiment completely but she agreed with Emma, after learning what Emma had borne alone for twenty four years, after what happened to hook as a result of bearing his burden alone, Regina couldn't sit by and watch a young boy like william make that same mistake “ Emma's right William. You have a family. You have friends, and we won't let you bear this burden alone. Its too much for one person to carry, saviour or not. Even saviours need saving from time to time. Its okay to need help. Its okay to need support from the people around you”

He sighed, “ I know. It's just... “

“ you're an old soul, whose seen a lot. Believe us, we get that. Our instinct is to insulate the people around us from our pain, but that only does more damage”

William chuckled wryly, “ you're not wrong but That's not what I was going to say”

Henry piped up from his chair, “ you aren’t used to being so Human, are you?”

William turned around, surprise in his gaze as Henry continued, sitting up and stretching as he addressed William “ you’ve been something else for so long, a spirit being, an entity that watched over the souls around you, but it’s been a long time since you’ve been human yourself. You Aren’t used to seeing things from a human perspective. Shame and guilt might as well be foreign concepts, it’s been so long since you’ve had to grapple with them”

William swallowed and nodded, “ yeah. How’d...?”

Henry pointed to the book laying beside him, “ I’ve been keeping up with everything going on. It told me a bit of your back story”

William stared at the book on the floor by the chaise., “ how’s that work exactly? Your gift?”

Henry shrugged, “ I think about a person, kinda picture them in my mind and move the pen over the page. The rest... it just shows up. Its like I’m....”

“Channelling. You Are channelling an ancient one. It makes sense, explains the omnipotence ”

Henry smirked, “ and you are an ancient one, in a hybrid body. That’s why they needed my parents DNA, why you had to be engineered, right? The ancient ones had to create a body strong enough to contain you, durable enough for you to be able to utilize your abilities”

William frowned, “ it’s.. Foggy, my memories of before, but that sounds about right, yeah.”

“ that’s why you remember speaking to Mulder, before. You were always meant to be His and Dana’s son. You were trying to help guide them down the path that would allow you to become human, well, humanish”

William nodded, “ yes.”

Emma frowned, "speaking of Mulder, has anyone seen him?"

Regina frowned, " the last time I saw mulder was before the battle in National City"

" you won't be seeing Fox Mulder again. He was providing intel to CSM. He fled just before the battle. He's gone and he won't be coming back"

Emma nodded, "" that makes sense, explains why CSM knew we were coming"

Regina frowned, " your vision didn't show you that?"

Emma shook her head, "CSM was a different type of Dark One, I could see some of what he was up to, but there were holes in my foresight when it came to him. And I think he knew that. Rumple on the other hand... Rumple was easy to figure out"

Regina frowned, " something else has been bugging me. How'd they get my DNA, and Emma's in the first place?"

William glanced at Emma," Well, they got mine in prison. When I was pregnant, they took my bloodwork, and I'm assuming that's how they got it. I'm not sure how they got yours..."

William nodded, " and they got Regina's from Dr. Whale."

"What? When? I knew he was a snake!" Emma glared, " I'm gonna kill that grimy bastard"

William chuckled, "Remember Greg and tamara? They were the syndicate's cronies, pan's specifically"

" are you telling me Pan was a dark one?" Emma asked, frowning, "Why didnt I know that?"

" because he wasn't. He wanted to be. CSM promised to make him as formidable as his son, but that promise never materialized, and Rumple prevented it by killing him. Kidnapping Henry, that was thier attempt to get ahold of a saviours heart."

REgina stared at William in surprise, “ you’ve been watching our family for a long time, if you know about Greg and Tamara.”

He nodded, “ I have. The ancient ones choose your family to be a part of the destruction of the darkness, so naturally I’ve kept an eye on you over the years. I was very interested in seeing what your family was capable of, what I was getting myself into.”

Henry’s eyes were wide, “ so everything that’s happened, all of it...”

“ it was meant to lead you all here, yes. “

Regina sighed, “ Fate”

William smiled, “ exactly”

Emma was a little slower to process what he was saying, “ so no matter what we did, we were always going to end up here, fighting the dark ones, finding you”

He nodded and Regina shook her head, “ our choices are our own, but fate... or, ancient ones really” she glanced at william who grinned sheepishly, “ , push us.”

William nodded, “ I’m sorry if it feels like you were manipulated. That wasn’t my intent”

“ so what’s your real name?” Henry asked and William laughed, “ just call me William. You couldn’t pronounce my true name.”

“ how old are you?”

William shrugged, “not sure really. You lose count after a while. Time is an illusion, really. You don’t measure it the same way when you aren’t in physical form, if you choose to measure it at all”Regina could tell her son was thoroughly enjoying talking to William, who was apparently an ancient one. Henry leaned towards William, “ so, if you are an ancient one, how come you don’t permanently take a physical form? I thought the ancient ones discovered a way to exist in a physical manifestation”

“No, we did. But we soon learned that we didn’t have the same access

to our abilities, our true nature. It didn't matter what skin we wore, it limited us, and we chose to live without limits, except in great need”

“ so you took physical form specifically to destroy the darkness?”

“Yes”

“ So what now? Do you return to your ethereal form?”

William shrugged and grinned, “ I think I’ll stick around for a bit. I forgot what it was like, living as you do, experiencing life like this.”

Emma sat up, glanced at Regina and asked, “ Hook said something just before he died. He said he was sent back so he could do what he did. Zeus sent him back. Does that mean Zeus, and Hades are Ancient Ones too, rather than dark ones?”

William nodded, they are”

“ so if they were ancient ones, and were worshipped as gods... that means... “

William laughed, “ I know where you are going with that, and I will tell you what I told you all before, I am not a god, neither are they. We are the first sentient beings in the universe, but we did not create the universe. There is a power out there greater than us. Did people attribute much of creation to us, and in some cases, rightfully so? Yes. Did we set the big bang in motion or create ourselves? No. We, like you have no idea where that original spark of life came from. After a while, you come to accept that some truths are not for us to know”

Regina let out a deep sigh and relaxed against the blonde beside her, “ this is a lot to absorb.”

William smiled kindly, “ I’m sure. What I hope you take away from this is that your family is unique. Your story isn’t over, far from it in fact. Everything in your lives has led you here, and will continue to direct your life. My only advice is to try and enjoy the journey.”

He patted Emma’s shoulder, “ Now, I need to go see my mothers and get some rest.” He made a face, “ it is so... taxing to be human.”

Everyone laughed as he left the room and Reigna released a happy sigh as Emma leaned into her, “whatcha thinking?”

“Aside from processing that bombshell? I’m thinking of having Lena invent some sort of forcefield to keep you from hurting yourself anymore. I’m not sure you have very many more brain cells left undamaged, especially after all the close calls over the last two months”

Emma laughed, “yeah, that might actually be a good idea.”

Lena sat in the living room, surrounded by her growing family. Kara was pressed against her side, her head resting on Lena’s shoulder. Lena had her arm wrapped snugly around the Kryptonian. Lillian sat across from her, talking to the charmings and Clarke’s mom and Zelena. Lillian sensed Lena watching her and glanced over at her. To Lena’s surprise, Lillian took in Kara in her arms and her gaze softened, and Lillian winked at her before returning to her discussion with the other adults. Monica was asleep in Dana’s lap, and Lena smiled at the fact that Dana was running her fingers through Monica’s hair Dana smiled at her, “you alright?” Lena nodded, “feel so much better now that the chip is gone and the cancer is too”

Dana nodded, “you look better too. There’s color in your cheeks now.”

“you mean, I don’t look like I’m dying anymore?” her tone was teasing but Clarke glared at her as she entered the room, “no joking about dying. I’ve had just about enough of people I love nearly dying on me” Lena could immediately tell Clarke had been crying and Lena remembered that her friend had died in battle, “I’m sorry. I didn’t think Clarke”

Clarke’s expression softened, “sorry for overreacting. I know you didn’t mean it like that. I’m glad you are feeling better”

Lena nodded. Glancing around the room, everyone seemed healthier, more relaxed. The danger has passed, and everyone in the town insisted on them regrouping at the mansion, and leaving the cleanup

to them. The grounder army insisted on handling the fallen. Indra had staunchly refused to let them help. "Go home. You've done enough. Let us do our part, we will prepare the fallen according to their customs."

There would be a memorial for the dwarves the following day the members of the covens who lost their own had already left, wanting to do last rites amongst their own people. The coven hardest hit was the french quarter coven. Lena had watched Monica and Zelena see them off on the behalf of the Swan Mills family as Emma was too wounded. Those who had left already cited their own worlds that needed them. Carmilla and the scooby gang had left, stating they had come while in the middle of investigating whether or not the angler fish had reproduced before it died. Still, many had stayed, wanting to elp the town recover from the damage done by the largest battle they had ever experienced.

Eleven and her adopted father had insisted that after the bodies were removed, they needed to do a control burn of the woods around the portal. All the bodies had to be cremated as well. Even though the upside down was gone, and the remaining monsters had died the second the darkness pulled back to its own realm, they couldn't take the chance of the monsters reproducing in the bodies of the fallen.

With a sigh, Lena relaxed back into the couch, and laid her head on Kara's. After everything, she was relieved to be surrounded by so many people. She felt safe here, protected and loved. She was literally surrounded by friends and family. She found herself drifting off to sleep, listening to the soft spoken words around her.

Monica stood beside Lena and Dana, holding the redhead's hand. They were dressed in thier nicest clothes, and standing in front of a series of funeral pyres, watching the massive fires burn. There was a heavy silence in the air as they watched, and Monica was again struck by a wave of gratitude that she hadn't lost anyone she loved. Dana was struggling with Mulder's betrayal and disappearance, but to Monica's surprise, this time, instead of pulling away from Monica, Dana leaned on her, let her be her rock. Dana glanced at her, " you're thinking too hard"

Monica managed a smile, “ sorry. Just thinking about how lucky I am. Everyone I love is here, alive, safe”

Dana glanced around and smiled, William was beside her, silent and watchful. Lena was between her and Kara, with Lillian standing by the kryptonian. That was the biggest surprise for Monica. Lillian’s change over the last few weeks was drastic. The woman was softer, calmer, more open and free with her affection towards Lena. She seemed to accept Kara’s place in Lena’s life easily, as well as Monica’s, going so far as to direct concern and affection their way as well. Lillian was surprisingly kindhearted under her harsh exterior. Oddly enough, She and Lillian were becoming something resembling friends. They were both Lena’s mothers, and Monica found that having Emma and Regina as role models on how to navigate that dynamic to be life saving. Lillian gravitated towards Regina, while Monica relied on Emma’s friendship. It helped immensely, having them to lean on whenever adjusting to the change became difficult.

After the last few weeks, Monica felt closer to the Swan Mills family than ever before. They were an extension of her own family, and she wouldn’t change it for anything in the world. If anything, she was torn, not sure how to navigate having family all across the country. She knew she needed to decide if she wanted to move out of DC, and potentially away from Lena, farther from the Swan Mills to be near Lena.

Dana squeezed her hand “ you’re doing it again. Stop worrying about the future. We will figure it out Mon. Together”

Monica couldn't help but grin at a phrase she had heard passed between Emma and Regina with startling regularity now coming from Dana, “ really?”

Dana nodded at the scene around them, “ this.. These people. They’ve become family to me. I want them, I want you and Lena, and Kara, and even Lillian in my life. It’s complicated, and it’s messy, but this is everything I ever wanted.”

Monica sighed in relief and Dana squeezed her hand tighter, “ wherever you and Lena go, me and William will follow”

William nodded his agreement, and grinned at Monica, “ we are a family mum. Let’s be a family”

Monica took a deep breath and nodded at her family. At one time, she had separated herself from everyone who loved her in order to protect them, thinking her choices had doomed her to a life alone. But now, now everything had changed, and she was surrounded by more love than she knew what to do with.

Glancing across the field, Emma caught her gaze and winked at her. Monica smiled at the blonde, knowing Emma, like her was remembering a lonely night in a cafe so many years ago. If someone had told her she would be standing here, surrounded by family and friends, she wouldn't have believed it and Emma wouldn't have either. They were both lost souls, trying to make the right decisions under impossible circumstances. Looking back now, she could see how it all played out, how fate, the ancient ones, whatever greater power was at play, had led them both here, reunited in friendship, and reunited with everyone they had thought lost to them forever. She wouldn't take a single moment back, because what she had now, was worth every painful moment alone.

Notes for the Chapter:

we are getting close. two chapters left folks. will probably write them tomorrow. today's been... a day. lol. last two chapters are fluff too. the next chapter is everyone checking out Henry's arena (for fun reasons, not fleeing danger reasons. lol) and the last chapter is gonna be the epilogue, exploring where everyone is one year later.

32. Grand Opening

Henry stood proudly outside of his arena, watching the whole of storybrooke, Arkadias and Grounders included file into the building. It was the grand opening of the massive facility and Henry had spent the better part of a week making modifications according to his brunette's mothers standards. She was insistent that if they were going to bring in the sports of the old world, they needed the safety technology of the new world. His arena, which had started out fairly small was now the size of a football stadium, though it's larger size was the only resemblance it held to a football field. The center of the stadium was a massive flat dirt covered space. Around the sides were thick plexiglass walls that rose a good fifteen feet it the air. Above that was a nearly invisible dome that hummed lowly. He had thought it was pretty cool until Lena showed him what the dome did. Anything that came into contact with it was fried instantly, unless of course if it was living. Henry wasn't sure how Lena had managed to create a barrier that could detect signs of life and prevent death or harm, but the brilliant CEO had.

Getting his mother to allow betting on matches was a whole other matter entirely.

It had started a few days after the last battle when Maggie and Clarke insisted on placing bets on Lexa's training exercises with Alex. granted, they were betting on how many times LExa would knock Alex on her ass before she stormed out of the ring, declaring the lesson was over, but still. It had given Henry an idea. People loved watching thier matches, and loved to guess who would win before hand. After watching Maggie repeatedly lose her bet to Clarke, and watching her continue to do it anyway, Henry wondered if everyone was going to do it anyway, why not make some money off of everyone;s determination to gamble.

He had tried just about every argument he could think of to convince his brunette mother until suddenly it dawned on him. Hs mother was mayor, and they had a sudden, massive influx of people they still were trying to place in homes, infrastructure that needed adjustment, and no funds to do it. There was only so much their magic could do and so he tried yet again to convince her, " Mom, think about it, any revenue made

can go towards town infrastructure. It has very little overhead and we can make people pay a few bucks to come in and just watch to cover that. Anything we make off of bets can go straight into the City budget. You've mentioned several times that you aren't sure how to pay for everything with the influx of people. Dozens of building and roads need repairs, tons of people are still relying on Grannes soup kitchen for food. Think of it as a fundraiser, or another way to bring in revenue without raising taxes on the town."

Regina arched a brow at her son, "since when are you an economics expert?"

Henry shrugged, "what? I'm the mayors kid, I pay attention"

She smirked, "I know what you are doing Henry, buttering me up, trying to make it look like a way to help the town..."

"is it working?"

She shook her head and sighed, "we do need more revenue coming in..."

Henry whopped and pumped his fist in the air, "sold!"

She started to protest and he laughed, "don't pretend that I didn't just talk you into it"

She playfully glared at him, "you are so much like Emma it's alarming sometimes"

He chuckled, and wrapped his mother in a hug, "yeah, but I'm also a lot like you."

"and that's just as terrifying honestly." Emma piped up from the doorway.

Henry grinned, "it worked!" he couldn't help the excited bounce in his step and Emma grinned at him while dodging the pen Regina launched in her direction, "I heard" she told Henry, then, "hey, rude much?" as the pen hit the wall behind her. Regina just gave her the look that always made Emma freeze in place.

"you put him up to this, didn't you?" Regina accused and Emma smirked,

“ actually, it was not me this time.”

“ I don’t believe you” Regina snarked and Emma raised her hands placatingly, “ it wasn’t me, I swear. Does any of that argument sound remotely like something I would say?”

Regina’s gaze turned thoughtful, “ no, you have a point. Your attempt to write a new budget for the Sheriff’s department last year was horrifying. Now that I think about it, it sounds more like a CEO’s argument”

Emma swallowed her offense over her failed budget attempt and nodded vigorously, “ a blonde one” she added swiftly and Henry laughed, “ Nice Ma, your promise to Cat lasted all of two minutes”

“ Hey, have you tried lying to that face?” Emma gestured to Regina’s perfectly manicured eyebrow lifted almost into her hairline before turning back to Henry, “ I can’t lie to that face. That face says you lie, you die. And besides, I didn’t say her name, you did, so technically, you broke your promise”

Henry snorted, “ Oh please, it doesn’t take a genius to figure out who you were talking about Ma, there are only two CEO’s in this town right now and only one of them is blonde...”

Regina sighed, rubbing her forehead in a vain attempt to hide the laughter in her eyes, “ I am surrounded by idiots”

Emma laughed, “ yeah okay Scar, but you know your life would be so boring without us”

Henry smirked at his moms, “ Well, this has been fun but I’ve gotta go install a couple betting booths in the arena.”

“ But we haven’t covered a betting system yet or how to tax the bets!” Regina protested.

“ no worries Mom, Ms. Grant already helped me figure that out too”

As he left the room and skipped down the hallway he heard his brunette mother growl, “ I’m gonna kill her!”

“ You can’t do that ‘Gina” Emma soothed, “ it’s bad press to kill your new

Storybrooke Mirror editor, especially since you trapped the last one in a mirror for..."

"Emma Swan, if you finish that sentence, so help me..."

Henry laughed as he left the building, shaking his head. Things were finally back to normal, right down to Emma driving his brunette mother crazy.

Laughing at the memory from earlier in the week, Henry returned his attention to the betting booths. Above the boards were screens showing the sparring matches listed for the day along with the winners of each match that had already been completed. Given that most of the town was curious about the heroes Emma brought to end the battle two weeks ago, literally everyone had turned out, if not to participate in the matches themselves, to watch and gossip about the newcomers. There were only a few matches left for the day. They had started at eight in the morning and it was now almost seven in the evening. They had broken for an hour break, allowing people to eat before the last two fights. The next match was his sister Lexa versus Green Arrow. As expected, Most everyone was betting on Lexa, with the exception of the DEO and superhero squad. After that would be the main event. The entirety of the shifters and heroes vs the swan mills family. It was a huge deal because the swan mills were heavily outnumbered, but Henry wasn't worried about it. He wasn't allowed to participate unless he handed over his authors pen before entering the arena because this was his arena, and they considered his abilities to give the swan mills an unfair advantage. He had simply shrugged and agreed to the terms. He was one hell of a sword fighter by now, as a direct result of his training by indra, so he wasn't too worried about their attempt to handicap him.

Snow's voice came over the PA system announcing the next fight and he shook his head. He had tried repeatedly to talk his grandma out of announcing, but she had been insistent and finally he gave up. Still, he was secretly hoping one of his magically inclined family members managed to "accidentally" hit her with a fireball before the end of the last match. He loved her dearly, but if he heard one more bird analogy during her commentary, he was going to lose it.

unsurprisingly , Regina's facial expression betrayed a similar

irritation, “ who the hell thought it was a good idea for her to announce for the day?”

He tried for his best innocent look and she frowned at him, “you? Really? I know you have charming blood, but I thought I raise you better than that” she stated with an air of false disappointment.

he grimaced, “ I tried mom, I really tried but there’s no dissuading Snow White once she sets her mind to something”

Regina laughed, “ don’t I know it. Come, let’s go watch your sister throw Oliver on his ass”

“Mom! Language”

She chuckled, “ I’m an adult dear, I can say whatever I want”

Henry grinned at the opening she gave him, “ so when I am older I can curse?”

She shook her head, “ doesn’t matter how old you are, you are never allowed to use that kind of language”

“ so why can you?” he asked finding her logic to be lacking.

She laughed, “ because I am a queen dear”

Emma appeared from behind them, “ and it always sounds refined coming out of her mouth, but when you curse, it’s just... awkward”

“ suck up” Henry muttered and Emma laughed, “ always. Why else do you think your mom keeps me around?”

“ If there is a reason for keeping you around Em-ma, it has nothing to do with your pitiful attempts to find your way into my good graces” Regina’s tone was deeply suggestive and Henry shuddered, “ yeah, I think I’m gonna go sit with Aunty Z. you guys are grossing me out”

Emma chuckled and called after him, “ good luck with that!”

A moment later, he realized what Emma had been laughing about. When he finally spotted his aunt, Zelena was sitting in the middle of

the bleachers, making out with Abby like a teenager. Gaggling, Henry promptly turned around and found his way back to his mother's ignoring the matching amused expressions they wore at his approach, "On second thought, I think I better stick with you. You guys at least keep it PG in public"

Emma smirked, "I did try to warn you"

They headed to their seats as Lexa stepped out into the center ring in the middle of the arena. For one on one fights, they used a raised platform that sat flush with the ground until both opponents were standing within the ring. Then the platform would rise several feet. All sparring had to be done within that 20 foot diameter. Ropes rose up out of the platform a moment later, providing a safety net, preventing falls. Lexa spotted her family in the crowd and waved as Oliver cracked his neck. Nothing but swords were allowed for this match, it was simply hand to hand combat. Henry knew that Oliver and Lexa were a good match. Both had extensive training and practice in the field of martial arts and knew how to handle blades. Though his sister had been doing it longer, and had the benefit of training under multiple instructors, including their mother.

Silence fell under the ring and then a bell sounded, Snow announcing the beginning of the match.

As usual, Lexa was calm, expressionless, and moving lightly on her feet. To Henry's surprise, Oliver moved much the same way, but was staying lower to the ground. He swung his sword a few times and nodded to Lexa, saying something no one but the two of them could hear. Lexa didn't answer, just continued to watch Oliver as he circled her. Henry smirked, Lexa had allowed Oliver to move almost behind her and was clearly letting him believe she couldn't see the issue with that. Oliver lashed out, trying to strike the first blow of the match, but Lexa's blade was already there. Almost immediately, it became clear why Oliver preferred to stand lower the ground. He preferred to swing low, lashing out at Lexa's legs, dropping to his knees and whirling swiftly as he lashed out. Lexa easily dodged his attacks, meeting each strike with her own blade. They established a sort of rhythm and Henry found his jaw dropping. He had seen his sister spar before, but Oliver was surprising him. The man was surprisingly light and quick on his feet, matching Lexa's fluidity with his own, and

yet, he couldn't seem to land a single hit.

He twisted close now, trying to land a blow against her waist by almost sliding it against her. As he whirled in, Lexa whirled out suddenly dropped back, appearing to be falling before landing on her hands and lashing out with her feet in two rapid succession kicks, knocking his blade away. He narrowly avoided a foot to the face and scrambled after his blade, recovering it just in time to parry off a high hit, coming down on his shoulder.

Oliver stayed low, rather than get back to his feet, trying his own kick. Lexa landed her first blow, bringing her blade down against his kicking foot hard and fast. If it wasn't for the protective armor they had made especially for the arena, Henry had no doubt that Oliver would have lost his foot. As it was, Lexa had caused him to cry out in pain. Henry grimaced, that was going to bruise, special armor or not. Oliver limped to his feet, finding it difficult to bear weight on his leg. Lexa came at him again, faster this time, almost charging him. Oliver ducked, narrowly avoiding the blade but losing his balance in the process. Lexa was over him, blade coming down fast. Oliver shocked everyone when he grabbed her blade, letting it cut into the flesh of his hand. Emma and Regina gasped, and Henry watched as a nod of admiration passed from Lexa to Oliver, from one warrior to another. Oliver tried to twist the blade out of Lexa's grip, failing to realize that she released the blade with a shove, slamming the hilt into his nose. He groaned in pain and staggered back, falling on his ass. She kicked both blades behind her and backed away from him, giving him room to stand. Oliver, in one last attempt, ducked his head low and charged her like a football player, obviously hoping to slam her against the ropes. Henry laughed, he knew what was coming next. Lexa waited until he was practically making contact before darting left, leaving a clear path directly to the ropes inches behind her. Oliver didn't realize his mistake until it was too late to stop his momentum and his body hit the ropes and the force caused the roped to push back hard, and launched him back, slamming him into the floor of the ring. The crowd went crazy as he tried, and failed to get up. From his position in the stands, Henry could tell, Oliver was going to have a few more scars to add to his extensive collection, and ironically, Lexa hadn't been the direct cause of a single one. With a groan, Oliver held up his hand and flashed the conceding signal,

indicating that the match was over. Lexa had won. Even from here he could see the smirk tugging at her lips as she helped Oliver off the ground and said something softly to him. Knowing Lexa, it was a pointer on how to avoid rope burn in the future. Everyone cheered as Felicity rushed out and helped her boyfriend out of the ring, tossing a glare at Lexa, who simply shrugged and waltzed off the platform, both swords in hand. She glanced up at the stands and Henry caught Emma's proud smile and thumbs up.

Glancing at the bet boards he grinned, "mom, we made a couple bucks on that one, and a few hundred thousand in revenue for the town"

Regina grinned at him, "okay, I admit it, opening up the ring to the public was a good idea"

He pointed at the exit, "we are up next. See you guys in the locker room!"

He jogged up the stairs, and towards the mens dressing rooms to prepare for the big fight.

Clarke joined her mother on the field and stared across the massive arena with a frown. It felt strange to be on this side, outside the Swan Mills gang, preparing to fight them. She had spent the last few months being a member of their family but in spite of her protests that she was family, Henry had refused to let her join them. It's supposed to be magic/ swords against shifters Clarke, it won't have the same effect if you are on our side. Besides, they need all the help they can get"

Clarke glared at him, "you are sending me to the losing side"

"hey! I resent that" Kara stated with a frown, "we are not losers!"

Clarke laughed, "when you are going up against the Swan Mills yes you are. Face it, Lexa and Emma have put you on your ass more times than you care to admit"

Kara glared at her, "whose side are you on anyway?"

Clarke smirked, “ are you really asking me that?”

Ruby growled at them, “ would you all shut up and help us come up with a game plan?”

Clarke sighed, “ fine”

Ruby began mapping out their team and their roles, “ Oliver, you’ve got Snow”

He groaned gratefully, “ finally... an easy one”

Everyone laughed and Ruby frowned, “ clearly you’ve never seen Snow with a bow and arrow”

He frowned, “ great. Are you telling me I’m about to get my ass handed to me all over again?”

Ruby shrugged, “ depends on how good of a shot you are. She’s slow on her feet, and a bit hesitant to react, so you have the advantage there, but she never misses”

“ we have to take out Emma and Regina first. We leave them in, we don't stand a chance”

“ and how exactly do you propose we do that?” Abby retorted

“ keep em busy, distract them. We are faster, in our various forms. Don't get too close, keep your distance, their magic won't pack as much of a punch further out than up close”

Abby snorted again and ruby glared at her, “ something you want to share with the class abby?”

“ you mean besides stating the obvious? Nope. I say we just go out there and try to last as long as possible. We all know how this is going to end. I mean, half of us are fighting our true love's out there”

Aaliyah Wolfe smirked, “ speak for yourself kitty cat, my true love is right here” she jabbed her finger at Serana who blushed

Abby growled and Serana chided Aaliyah, “ stop baiting her, she’s on

our team”

“ while sucking face with the other team” Aaliyah pointed out.

Kara frowned, “ actually, she bats for the same team... technically”

Everyone laughed, and Aaliyah grinned, “ you know what I meant”

Alex frowned, “ so wait, we don't actually have a plan?”

J'onn shrugged, “ to hell with plans, Abby's right, we are going to get our asses handed to us. I'm just hoping to land Emma on hers at least once”

Maggie cracked up, “ I'd pay to see that”

Alex shoved her, “ don't even. I saw you placing bets earlier. You think we don't stand a chance out there”

Maggie laughed, “ I hedged my bets, just in case. Either way, I win.”

“Traitor” Kara teased.

Monica's voice came over the intercom, announcing the final match. They all groaned, Kara moping as she told Clarke, “ we are dead meat”

Clarke winked, “ maybe, but hey, you've improved dramatically regardless”.

Kara shrugged and headed outside. Clarke met Lexa's eyes across the field and grinned when Lexa winked at her. Clarke raised her eyebrows and focused on calming her nerves as the bell dinged, signalling the beginning of the match.

The match lasted all of five minutes before J'onn got up after being knocked over by Emma for the fifth time and ran screaming across the field back towards their locker room, “ retreat, retreat!”

Everyone watched him run and laughed. Seconds later, the shifters conceded to the Swan Mills. Still, Clarke found it difficult to be disappointed when Lexa swept her up and kissed her hard, “ It was a

good try” Lexa offered as explanation when Clarke asked why she was being rewarded for losing. Clarke shrugged and accepted the answer, letting Lexa scoop her up and carry her bridal style off the field while everyone around them laughed.

33. Epilogue- A New Kind of Family

Storybrooke- One Year Later

Regina stood in the foyer of her home, checking her reflection in the mirror by the door.

Emma appeared behind her smirking, “ you look beautiful Love. Now, could you please let my parents in before Snow shorts out the doorbell again”

“ and why can’t you do it?” Regina fired back.

Emma blanched, “ because I um...”

Aaliyah came to her rescue, “ because she is helping me save the kitchen from your sister. Apparently your skill in the kitchen was learned, not hereditary. Zelena has set the curtains on fire twice already today”

“What?!” Regina shrieked.

Emma laughed, “ Go deal with my mother, you handle her better than I do, and I’ll go handle your sister, who we all know I have more patience for”

She gently shoved Regina towards the door and darted back towards the back of the house, Aaliyah laughing behind her. Regina shook her head and ripped open the door, “ Snow dear, if I have to replace the wiring in my house one more time because you cannot figure out how to use a doorbell properly...”

“ then you will do something horribly, unspeakably cruel to me, I know. We’ve been over this” Snow dismissed her anger with a smirk

“ then why do you continue doing it if you value your life?” Regina asked, genuinely wondering if Snow’s IQ was even lower than she had initially estimated

“ because *dear* , your threats have lost their weight since Emma came to storybrooke. Now it’s just... adorable, and I do so enjoy returning the favor after twenty eight years of your petty pranks”

Regina growled, “ I am not adorable”

Snow patted her cheek, laughing, “ Adorable and delusional. I can see why Emma fell for you”

“Emma! I hope you aren’t too attached to your mother...”

Emma ducked her head out, “ Mother, stop antagonizing Gina. Gina, chill out, there’s smoke pouring out of your ears”

Snow adopted her faux innocent expression, “ I simply complimented your girlfriend...” Emma sighed, “ I swear to god mom, if you don't stop antagonizing Regina, then whatever she decides to do in retribution is completely justified”

Snow shut up promptly, heading for the decanter in the hall, “ my own daughter, turning against me”

“ yes, because I live here, and I rather like living here.” Emma pointed out. Regina smirked and pressed a kiss to the corner of Emma’s mouth, “ good answer dear, but I think you are forgetting something”

Emma flushed, “ oh, right, I live here, with my amazing family, and the best partner anyone could ask for and I have just enough brain cells functioning properly to not want to mess it up”

Regina laughed, “ better, but not what you were forgetting”

Emma frowned, then grinned at her mom “ and I love her, more than anything and...”

Regina interrupted the blonde with a chuckle, “Emma, as much as I would love to stand here and listen to your adorable rambling all day, something is still burning in the kitchen”

“ shit, gotta go!” Emma dashed away again and Regina shook her head, laughing at her true love.

Emma's parents were watching her with amusement, tears in Snow's eyes. She hugged Regina fiercely, "I'm so happy for you Regina."

Regina nodded, "thanks Snow. now, lets go see what your grandchildren are up to. It's been awfully quiet today"

They headed for the basement and descended the stairs to find all of the swan mills children, their partners, Octavia and Lincoln, Kara and Lena, Dana, William, Lillian and Monica huddled over a game of dungeons and dragons. David whistled, "how long has this campaign been going on?" as he ushered Snow over to the remaining chairs to watch.

Henry glanced up grinning at his grandfather, "yesterday morning" he turned and saw Regina's raised eyebrow, "you have been playing since yesterday?"

He nodded sheepishly, "we were too excited to sleep. Its our first big reunion, and... its been a year since I've seen them Mom"

Regina sighed, "fine, but you go to bed at a decent hour tonight"

"On my honor" he stated with a smirk and everyone chuckled.

Eleven suddenly came down the stairs her friends behind her, "is it too late for us to join?" Regina backed away, deciding to let everyone play the game uninterrupted. Monica and Dana grinned at her while Lillian stretched her legs, "Elle, you may take my place, I need to stretch my legs."

Lillian followed Regina back up to the main floor through to the kitchen where Aaliyah was fanning out the kitchen, Serana stirring something on the stove, and Emma showing Zelena how to properly use a vegetable chopper. Abby handed Lillian another knife and a cutting board, immediately putting the woman to work. Lillian accepted them with a smile and began chatting happily with Abby. Regina grinned at the scene. This is her family. Larger than ever before, made of blood relations, in laws, and friends. They had fought the greatest battles of their lives together and now, were celebrating one year of peace and quiet.

Lena and Kara were now engaged, and Kara was the newly minted CEO of Catco. Cat grant had moved with her son to Storybrooke, moving into the large home next to the mansion with her son. She took the editor job at the Storybrooke Mirror, and when that wasn't challenging enough, she ran for and won a seat on the city council. Lincoln and Octavia married six months ago, and were both ambassadors on the diversity council. Aaliyah had returned to Skyrim and married Serana, became High Queen and led a successful campaign to rid Tamriel of the Thalmor. She was steadily moving Skyrim towards a more democratic government, allowing people to vote for the first time on important matters. Zelean and Abby were now living together, happily dating and raising Robin together. Lexa and Clarke had moved out a month prior and worked on the city council as well. Henry was preparing to graduate high school a few years early. His grades were outstanding and he was already applying to colleges.

For her part, Regina had been working with the City council to make the town more accessible across realms. Henry headed up the Portal guard, but with him soon leaving, they needed replacements. Elle and Jim Hopper had mentioned moving to storybrooke and she hoped they were up to the job. Raven had moved out to National City, and was working in the DEO under the watchful eye of J'onn while dating Winn. Will and Eretrei were still looking for a way to keep everyone safe from the demon horde but free Amberle from the tree. Allanon was straining a handful of new warlocks. They couldn't come to the reunion, but sent their well wishes to the group.

Korra and Asami were still working on integrating the Spirit world with their world, a complicated endeavor that they frequently called upon Emma to assist them with. In fact, Emma traveled across realms frequently now. She didn't need portals to realm jump, and now she could jump in time as well, thanks to a gift from River Song.

For the first time in a long time, everyone was back under one roof. It was mind boggling to Regina how much had changed in the last year. The only one they couldn't get ahold of and whose missing presence was acutely felt was River song. When she had asked Emma why she wasn't on the invite list,. Emma had cried, " I brought her in before her trip to the library. Right before"

“ what’s that mean, where’s river?”

Emma swallowed, “ Gone. she’s been saved to a massive library database. There’s no way to extract her.”

Regina had held Emma while she cried for her friend. Emma calmed and then went right back to the guest list, calm and steady. It was something that still caught Regina off guard about Emma. She knew more about the passage of time, about time travel, about jumping realms that any other magic user Regina knew. And while that knowledge was often helpful to the blonde, and the people around her, she paid for it by saying goodbye to her friends often as soon as she met them. But she kept her chin up and didn’t let it bother her.

“Gina, you okay?” Emma’s hand on her shoulder and calm voice pulled her from her thoughts, “ yeah. Just... happy that everyone is here...”

Emma nodded, “Except for River. I know. I miss her too”

“ I barely knew her, but she seemed like a remarkable person. Its strange having everyone here, and you still notice the one person who isn’t”

Emma nodded and rubbed Regina’s back, before changing the subject “ come on, We need you to try the sauce for the lasagne. We followed the instructions, but its like something is still missing”

Regina laughed and without reaching for the pot she dug out a small container and dashed some in.

Emma laughed, “ should have known. Red pepper flakes”

Regina winked, “gives it a little kick”

That night, in their massive dining room, everyone ate and laughed together and Regina sat by Emma and held the blonde’s hand. For the first time in her life, she felt like she was at home. There was a time when Regina felt alone in the world, rejected, hated and feared. If you had told her then, in the middle of her darkest days, that she would spend her time with people who genuinely enjoyed her presence, that she would be living under the same roof with, and

sleeping beside the daughter of her greatest enemy, she would have laughed in their faces before snapping their necks. But now, glancing around her, she found that the impossible was true. She was loved, she had a family. She had friends. More than that, the young girl who had believed she would never love again, found love in the most unlikely of places, and rather than destroying her, it had saved her. Fate was funny like that she thought. And honestly, she wouldn't have it any other way.

Notes for the Chapter:

and that's all she wrote folks. I did it. I wrote two whole novels in fourteen months. That is a completely unprecedented accomplishment for me and I owe it to my loyal readers/commentators. A huge thank you to everyone who stuck through this with me til the end. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did. I am incredibly thankful for all the encouragement on both stories, and loved chatting with each of you in the comments section. I may still do one shots for this universe, but I don't think I will do another full length story for this universe. I have other projects I have back burnered to finish this. If you like my writing, feel free to check out my other stories. I hope to continue to see you all in my comments section.